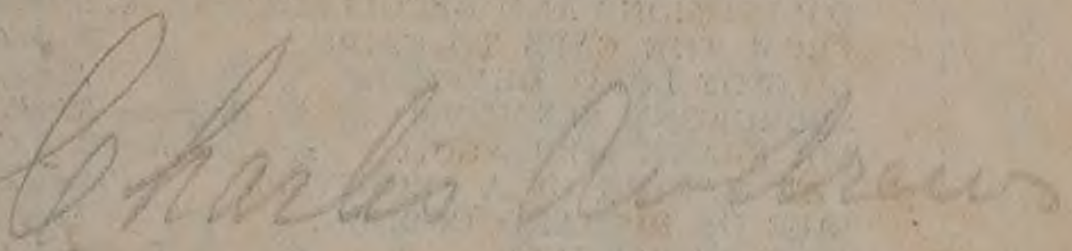
# FAMOUS MODERN BATTLES



# *UNIFORM WITH THIS VOLUME.*

THE GREAT BOER WAR. *Arthur Conan Doyle.*
COLLECTIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS. *G. W. E. Russell.*
FROM THE CAPE TO CAIRO. *E. S. Grogan.*
LIFE OF LORD DUFFERIN. *Sir A. Lyall.*
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A BOOK ABOUT ROSES. *S. Reynolds Hole.*
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AT THE WORKS. *Lady Bell.*
MEXICO AS I SAW IT. *Mrs. Alec Tweedie.*
PARIS TO NEW YORK BY LAND. *Harry de Windt.*
LIFE OF LEWIS CARROLL. *Stuart Dodgson Collingwood.*
A NATURALIST IN THE GUIANAS. *Eugène André.*
THE MANTLE OF THE EAST. *Edmund Candler.*
LETTERS OF DR. JOHN BROWN.
JUBILEE BOOK OF CRICKET. *Prince Ranjitsinhji.*
BY DESERT WAYS TO BAGHDAD. *Louisa Jebb.*
SOME OLD LOVE STORIES. *T. P. O'Connor.*
FIELDS, FACTORIES, & WORKSHOPS. *Prince Kropotkin*
LIFE OF LORD LAWRENCE. *R. Bosworth Smith.*
PROBLEMS OF POVERTY. *Dr. Chalmers.*
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LIFE AND LETTERS OF LORD MACAULAY.—I. & II.
*Sir George O. Trevelyan, Bart.*
WHAT I SAW IN RUSSIA. *Hon. Maurice Baring.*
WILD ENGLAND OF TO-DAY. *C. J. Cornish.*
THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS. *Mrs. Alec Tweedie.*
THE VOYAGE OF THE "DISCOVERY."—I. & II.
*Captain Scott.*
FELICITY IN FRANCE. *Constance E. Maud.*
MY CLIMBS IN THE ALPS AND CAUCASUS. *A. F. Mummery.*
JOHN BRIGHT. *R. Barry O'Brien.*
POVERTY. *B. Seebohm Rowntree.*
SEA WOLVES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.
*Commander E. Hamilton Currey, R.N.*

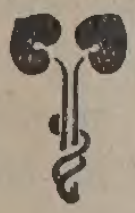
*Etc., etc.*

*Others to follow.*

# FAMOUS MODERN BATTLES

BY

A. HILLIARD ATTERIDGE



THOMAS NELSON AND SONS
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN
AND NEW YORK

# PREFACE.

THIS book may be regarded as a sequel to Creasy's "Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." Writing the closing words of his work in June 1851, he referred to the Exhibition held in London in that year as a victory over "selfish prejudices and international feuds," and the herald of a new era of concord among the nations. Three years later the Crimea War began, the first of a long series of conflicts and of a period of activity in the development of armies and armaments such as no other century had seen.

I have endeavoured to trace the changes of modern war during this eventful time by telling the story of some of the most remarkable battles of the last sixty years. I have not always followed Creasy's example in the selection of my subjects. I have not always chosen a "decisive battle," though many of those I have dealt with can claim this rank. My idea has been to show the development of armaments, tactics, and all the methods of war on land in

the recent period, by describing in popular untechnical language typical battles that illustrate the gradual change from Crimean days to our own. I have tried in each case to explain the causes of victory and defeat, and to show the reader something of what I may call the mechanism of a pitched battle. I have spared no effort to secure accuracy of statement. I have visited some of these famous battlefields; I have discussed these great events with soldiers who took part in them or who had made a special study of them, and I have in every case used in my own investigations the best maps I could procure and a mass of official and unofficial narratives bearing on the subject. The book is not written for the expert but for the general reader, but I trust that even professional students of war will find it interesting.

A. H. A.

London, November 6, 1913.

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*N.B.—The maps will be found at the end of the book.*

# FAMOUS MODERN BATTLES.

## CHAPTER I.

### THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA.

*September* 20, 1854.

THE nineteenth century opened amid the storm of the revolutionary wars. The guns fired against the Bastille on July 14, 1789, had been echoed by the artillery of a hundred battlefields. The Atlantic and the Mediterranean, the Rhine, the Danube, and the Nile, the Alps and the Pyrenees, had heard the cannon thunder "bellowing victory, bellowing doom." Napoleon, the greatest of the world's war leaders, had sprung into sudden fame. Then, with a brief truce after the Treaty of Amiens, the Wars of the Empire followed the Wars of the Revolution; and when the end came at Waterloo, Europe looked back upon more than twenty years of strife, that had cost hundreds of thousands of lives. Even for the exultant victors it was like waking from a nightmare.

A long period of industrial and commercial

development followed in which Britain took the lead. For forty years the great powers of Europe were at peace. There were, indeed, minor conflicts, partly the outcome of the movement against the reaction that followed Waterloo, partly the result of the new political theory of the right of nationalities to constitute themselves into self-governing states. There were the war of Greek Independence, and the local conflicts that followed the revolutionary movements of 1830 and 1848. But throughout all this period there was a prevailing feeling that peace was the first of national interests, and that a state had more to gain from the triumphs of industry, science, commerce, and colonization than from victory on the battlefield and enterprises of armed conquest.

When Louis Napoleon, the nephew of the great emperor, was aiming at power in France, and working for the restoration of the imperial system, he had to protest that he had no dreams of military ambition, and that the restored empire would be an empire of peace. As President of the French Republic he placed in the forefront of his policy the development of the national wealth of France. In England the Queen's husband, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, put himself at the head of a great international movement which found expression in the famous exhibition of 1851. Its leading idea was that henceforth nations would compete with each other only in the peaceful contests of science, industry, and art.

It is not easy for us to realize the hopeful enthusiasm of that May Day of sixty years ago when Queen Victoria, surrounded by the ambassadors of the civilized world, was the centre of a pageant of peace, celebrated under the great roof of glass that seemed a fairy palace, with its transparent arches, flooded with summer sunshine, towering above the elms of Hyde Park. It was noted as a happy augury that the United States had sent their contributions to the great display on board of a warship that had fought against the British flag in 1814, and was now disarmed to make room for the conveyance of this "peaceful store." The flags of all nations, flying side by side, seemed to signal that war was banished from the earth. Orators and journalists spoke and wrote of the day as marking a new epoch in the world's progress. Thackeray voiced the feeling of the time in his "May Day Ode," in which he pointed to the inventions of peace as England's best armaments :—

"Look yonder where the engines toil :
These England's arms of conquests are,
The trophies of her bloodless war ;
Brave weapons these.
Victorious over wave and soil,
With these she sails, she weaves, she tills,
Pierces the everlasting hills,
And spans the seas."

This pleasant dream of the coming of a new Golden Age of universal peace did not last long. Seven months later Louis Napoleon made himself master of France by a military revolution, and began the

organization of a formidable military and naval power. The Crimean War of 1854 was largely due to his ambition to revive the warlike glories of the First Empire, and link once more the name of Napoleon with victory. It began a new period of frequent wars and ever-growing armaments, that have gradually made Europe a vast camp.

During the long peace after Waterloo comparatively little had been done for the improvement of armaments. From the period of the Crimean War onward all the resources of science, invention, and industry have been devoted to placing deadlier weapons in the hands of the soldier, and armies and navies have seen greater changes than any that are recorded since the invention of gunpowder heralded the doom of the steel-clad chivalry of mediæval war.

The most interesting way in which one can trace the chief stages of this evolution, which has changed not only the conditions under which armies meet in conflict, but also those under which nations live in a state of armed peace, is to tell the story of some of the famous battles of the half-century that began with the allied expedition against Russia in the Crimea and ended with victories won against the same power on the battlefields of far Eastern Asia, by a people who, when the Alma was won, were still armed with bows and arrows, matchlocks, and spears.

The battle of the Alma itself differed little from the battles fought in the days of Napoleon and Wellington. The tactical traditions of those earlier

times had been regarded during the long peace as something sacred. The chief change in armaments was that the infantry of the French and English contingents carried the muzzle-loading rifle. Most of the Russians were still armed with the old percussion musket, with an effective range of about 100 yards; and even in the allied armies it was still considered that to open fire at a much longer range was only to waste ammunition, for musketry meant drill, and there was as yet no scientific knowledge of the powers of the new rifles. The field artillery was still that of the Napoleonic wars—smooth-bore muzzle-loading guns, throwing a solid iron ball weighing a few pounds, with a limited range and an unreliable flight. Several of the officers of higher rank had fought in the early wars of the century. Lord Raglan, who commanded the British contingent, had been the hero of many a dashing exploit in the Peninsula, and had lost an arm while serving on Wellington's staff at Waterloo. Prince Alexander Sergievitch Mentschikoff, the Russian commander, had fought against Napoleon in the campaigns of Moscow and Leipzig, and in the invasion of France. The battle of the Alma was thus a link between the Napoleonic wars and the new period of conflict that so sadly disappointed the hopes of 1851.

England and France were the allies of the Sultan. The war had begun when a Russian army was on the Danube, ready to advance on Constantinople. The object of the Western powers in intervening was to prevent the Czar Nicholas I. making himself the

dictator of the East. The landing of the allied troops at Varna, and the threat of an Austrian army descending on the rear of the Russians, had forced them to withdraw across the Pruth.

In this stage of the war the English and French armies never actually encountered the invaders, and their losses were chiefly due to cholera, which was then devastating the Continent, and to the malarial fevers of the Danube marshes. By the forced retreat of the Russians the first object of the war had been attained, but the Emperor Napoleon III. had no wish to see his army return home without any battle laurels, and England accepted his proposal that though it was late in the year, and the Crimean winter would begin before long, an expedition should be sent to capture and dismantle the maritime fortress of Sebastopol, Russia's great stronghold in the Black Sea.

The expedition was to be made up of 26,000 British troops under Lord Raglan, 32,000 French under Marshal St. Arnaud, and 7,000 Turks under Omar Pasha. In all it was an army of 65,000 men with 124 guns.

St. Arnaud had fought as a volunteer in the Greek War of Independence, and had won a high reputation as a soldier in Algeria. He had been given his marshal's baton for the part he played in the Paris *coup d'état* and the revival of the empire. When he went to the Crimea he was suffering from the fatal illness that was soon to end his days. Only his iron will enabled him to retain the command.

Omar was a Croat renegade. His real name was Michael Lattas. After serving for a while in the Austrian army he had got into trouble for some breach of discipline, deserted to avoid a court martial and gone to Constantinople, where be became a Moslem; took the name of Omar, and entered the Sultan's army with the rank of colonel. He had become famous for his defence of the line of the Danube against the Russian invasion.

The troops began to embark at Varna on September 1, the British on board a fleet of transports escorted by a powerful squadron, the French crowded in the gun-decks of their warships in a way that might have proved seriously embarrassing if the Russian fleet had come out of Sebastopol and offered battle during the voyage across the Black Sea. On September 8th the allied armada assembled near Serpents Island, off the mouths of the Danube. On the 14th the landing in the Crimea began on the coast about thirty miles north of Sebastopol, at a place marked on the English charts as "Old Fort," from the ruins of a fortress built there by the Venetians in the days when they had colonies in the Crimea.

The Russians made no attempt to oppose the landing. A few Cossacks watched the first boat-loads come ashore, and then rode away to the southward. Mentschikoff had decided to await the attack of the Allies on a selected position formed by a range of bold heights along the south bank of the little river Alma, between Old Fort and the northern front of Sebastopol. He could only muster some

35,000 men and 96 guns, but he trusted to the natural strength of the position to compensate for the great disadvantage of numbers.

The Allies were not ready to begin their march southwards till the early morning of September 19th. The right flank of the advance was protected by the sea, the left and front were covered by the small cavalry force available—about 1,000 British sabres. During the day there was a skirmish with a reconnoitring detachment of Russians, and when the Allies halted in the evening they were so near the Alma that a short march would enable them to attack the enemy's position next day.

The night was fine and clear, and from the allied bivouacs along the Bulganak River the Russian watch-fires were in sight, glowing in two red rows of light, one above the other; for some of the enemy's troops were on the low ground along the Alma, and the rest on the heights three or four hundred feet above it. From the south bank of the Bulganak there is first a gentle rise and then a long even slope to the Alma valley. Beyond the Alma the ground rises almost at once into sharp declivities and steep, cliff-like bluffs. Along the winding course of the river below the heights, and on each side of the stream, there was in 1854 a pleasant region of orchards and vineyards, with some farmhouses and a few villas belonging to the wealthier residents of Sebastopol; and there were three villages—Almatamak, about half a mile from the river's mouth; Burliuk, two miles farther up; and Tarchanlar, another two miles inland.

The houses were built of wood. At Burliuk a bridge carried the highroad from Eupatoria to Sebastopol across the Alma. South of this bridge the road ascended the heights by a wide sloping hollow, like one of the chines of the English chalk downs. East of Burliuk the slopes, everywhere easily accessible, run up to a bold, flat-topped summit known as the Kurgane Hill. West of Burliuk the heights are steeper and steeper, till they end in precipitous cliffs that look down upon the sea.

The Allies had searched the whole position with telescopes, in the hands of skilled observers perched high on the masts of their warships. The naval guns could bring fire to bear on the seaward end of the heights, and it was expected that the Russians would not hold the western part of the position because it would be thus exposed to fire from the flank, and also because the cliff-like bluffs above Almatamak were so difficult to ascend that Mentschikoff would probably consider it impossible for any large force to attack on that side. As a matter of fact, he had decided that the ground here was inaccessible for the Allies, and he was only anxious about the chance of troops being landed from the fleet at a gap in the cliffs a little more than a mile south of the Alma mouth, where there was a bit of beach, and a rough cart-track led up to the village of Ulukul Akles. He had stationed a battalion with a few guns at the village to watch this point.

This done, he concentrated everything else for the defence of the ground on both sides of the high-

road above Burliuk. Skirmishers held the orchards and vineyards along the Alma, with supports on the shelf of low ground between the river and the heights. The hollow through which the road ascends from the bridge bristled with cannon. Sixteen battalions and eight batteries were held in reserve near the road on the crest of the heights. Eighteen more battalions were on or behind the Kurgane Hill, and half-way down its slope two earthwork batteries, armed with heavy guns, had been erected. In the narratives of the day they are generally called redoubts, but they were really only open breastworks pierced for guns. Behind, and to the east of the hill, he had some 3,000 cavalry.

The Allies had numbers on their side—roughly, 60,000 against 35,000. The only advantage of the Russians was that they held a natural rampart. The Alma was no great obstacle; it was fordable in most places, though here and there were deep holes that a rapid current made more dangerous.

It is interesting to consider at this point the plan of attack adopted, the possible alternatives, and the difference that the weapons and methods of to-day would have made in the problem.

The plan was a modification of one proposed by St. Arnaud to Raglan. The French had only about 150 mounted men—a squadron of the Chasseurs d'Afrique and a few Spahis (Algerian native cavalry). The British had Lucan's cavalry division, about a thousand strong, and they had accordingly been given the left or landward flank of the advance, where their

cavalry could protect the whole army against any enterprise of the Russian horsemen. St. Arnaud's plan was that the British, with part of the French army, should attack the Russian position in front, from Burliuk to Tarchanlar; while the rest of the French, supported by the Turks, should ascend the bold heights between Almatamak and the sea, covered by the guns of the fleet, reach the plateau, and swing round against the Russian left flank and rear. St. Arnaud answered for it that his men would not only climb the precipitous heights on this side, but also get some guns up by rough cart-tracks that ascended through rain-worn gullies in the bluff. If this could be done, there was an attractive easiness about the rest of the plan. It meant that a large force of the Allies would be able to reach a part of the heights that was all but undefended, and then meet the enemy on even ground. The weak point of the plan was the temporary division of the Allies. If the Russians had been more enterprising, the detached flanking force might have had to face a dangerous counter-attack as it topped the ascent.

There was a possible alternative plan, which no one seems to have thought of till long after, because so much value was set on being in continual touch with the fleet. The turning of the Russian left would drive the enemy back on the roads leading to Sebastopol. To the allied leaders it seemed enough to capture the Alma heights, and thus clear the way to the fortress. But a general's business is not merely to

shift the position of an enemy's army and occupy the ground it stands upon, but to destroy it. And there would have been a fair chance of accomplishing this if the Allies had used their superior numbers to demonstrate against the Russian front, work round the enemy's right, ascend the slopes east of Tarchanlar, and storm the Kurgane Hill from this side, cutting the enemy's line, of retreat and driving him back on the seaward cliffs, where he would come under the fire of the fleet. The less heroic and less profitable plan was adopted.

Except that the river in front of it is nearly everywhere fordable, the Alma position greatly resembles that of Colenso in the South African War. There is the same long open slope for the approach in front. The steppe is very like the veldt. There are the same heights beyond the river. If Mentschikoff had had Louis Botha's weapons, the open steppe north of the Alma would have been swept by the rapid fire of long-ranging rifles from trenches along the low ground. Quick-firing artillery on the heights would have shelled the allied advance three miles from the river, and made the march in closely-formed line and column impossible. A mere handful of rifles with a few quick-firers would have stopped the flanking columns as they climbed the heights. It is true that a compensating advantage for the attack would be the long-range fire of a modern fleet searching even the slopes of the Kurgane Hill; but, on the other hand, all our experience of the Boer War went to show that even a heavy bombardment produces little

effect on brave men who have had time to dig shelters in the hillsides.

But all the perplexing tactical problems that modern armaments have produced were far in the future when on that bright September morning—" like an English summer day in June "—the Allies broke up their bivouacs on the Bulganak and slowly formed for the advance. War was still a brilliant spectacle, not a dull, matter-of-fact scientific business. Khaki uniforms and smokeless powder have spoiled the battle-field from the picturesque point of view. But the advance to the Alma was all brightness and colour.

When, after long delays, the allied armies at last moved forward formed up for battle, the sight was something like what is now to be seen only at some royal review. Out on the extreme left there was the flash and glitter of Lord Lucan's brigades of British cavalry, red and blue and gold in profusion—hussars, lancers, dragoons, and horse artillery. Then with a swarm of dark-green uniformed riflemen thrown out in front, four red-coated infantry divisions marched arrayed in two lines, each more than a mile and a half long, with a fifth division in column behind them as a reserve. The men were formed two deep, with field batteries in the intervals between the divisions. The Russians from the heights saw for the first time the famous "thin red line." On the left it was formed by the Duke of Cambridge's splendid division, the Brigade of Guards—three battalions of tall bearskin-capped Grenadiers, Coldstreams, and Scots, with Colin Campbell's Highland Brigade on

their left, an array of brilliant tartans and nodding plumes.

On the right, beyond the highroad, were three French divisions in column. In front—moving in loose, irregular skirmishing lines—went the blue-coated riflemen, the dashing Chasseurs de France. The massive divisional columns behind this screen had each at its head a regiment of Zouaves in their quaint semi-Arab dress. The rest were linesmen in baggy red trousers and blue tunics. Each division was followed by its batteries; and near the highway rode St. Arnaud with his staff and an escort of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, with a few Arab Spahis in their white mantles. Farther away, marching towards the cliffs near the sea, was Bosquet's Division, in two columns, with the red-fezzed Turkish infantry tramping after that which was farthest to the right.

From the rolling slope of the steppe there was a clear view over the sea. Near the land could be seen ten French and three British war-steamers, cleared for action, and moving to shell the heights. Steam-propelled men-of-war were still something of a novelty, and men looked at them with the sensation of those who watch a strange experiment. Farther out were the main British, French, and Turkish squadrons under shortened sail, the fleets of the past showing the spectator what navies were in the days of the Napoleonic wars.

Most of the Russian array was out of sight, but on the green slopes of Kurgane Hill dull gray squares marked where the enemy's battalions were waiting

and the two earthwork batteries showed up boldly on a terrace below the summit. But the enemy's main forces were behind the visible crest line, and the nearest of them were hidden in the orchards and vineyards along the river.

Of the British soldiers, who looked curiously at the heights they were to storm, few had seen war. Even among the generals there were some who had never yet faced hostile fire, and very few officers had even had the experience of handling troops at manœuvres. It was the time of steady barrack-yard drill and formal parades and reviews. But out of this everlasting round of drill and the iron discipline of the day there came the certainty that brigades and regiments would move into action like animated machines; and there was a sound tradition from the old wars that the fire of a British line, formed two deep, could beat off the heaviest column of Continental troops, and that in the crisis of the attack the bayonet would break through anything, provided the men moved steadily shoulder to shoulder, and took no notice of the fact that a certain number were being killed. A few of the officers had put the matter to the test in other days, and no one doubted for a moment that the old method would work again.

Beside one of the brigadiers there rode the pioneer of war correspondents—Russell of the *Times*—a stout, jolly-looking little Irishman. Soldiers and civilians were far more apart than they are now, and the brigadier felt rather annoyed at the intrusion of the mere journalist. "What are you doing here?" he said to

Russell. "What do you know about battles?" "Not much," replied the Irishman with a smile; "but I am thinking there are a good many here in the same fix."

Russell might have found confirmation for his surmise in the fact that presently the whole array halted to give time for Bosquet's flank attack to get forward, and instead of halting to wait where no useless loss would be incurred, Raglan and St. Arnaud stopped the advance only when they were within long range of the heavier guns on the opposing heights, but just far off enough to make it impossible for their own artillery to engage the Russian batteries 400 feet above the plain. The men lay down. The officers stood or walked or rode about. A flash on the heights, a cloud of smoke, and then a round iron ball came bounding with a deadly leap from its first touch of the ground in front and killed a soldier in the foremost of the red lines. It was the opening shot of the battle. Then, for what seemed a weary time, the Russian guns fired coolly at the huge target presented by the halted armies. The French on the right were more out of reach, and most of the shots fell in the British lines. Their thin formation minimized the loss, but even so there were many casualties. The men stood it well. They even made bets on the next shot. Some ate from their haversacks, some puffed at a pipe, and a few slept under the hot sun. Raglan and his staff were a favourite mark for the enemy's gunners, and the large group of mounted men changed their position frequently, but at a slow, leisurely

walk. It was still the tradition that to avoid fire or take cover was discreditable. There was more of swagger and less of practical business about war.

And now from the sea there came the loud booming of the heavy naval guns. The steamers, with clouds of sunlit white powder smoke mingling with the black trails from their funnels, were firing at haphazard at the western heights, on the off-chance that there were some Russians there waiting for Bosquet's two columns, which had now reached the river. D'Autemarre's Brigade was marching through Almatamak village, where there was a wooden bridge. Bouat's Brigade had marched for the river mouth. A ford was reported there, and beyond a path zigzagged up the cliff above the sea. The infantry found the ford difficult—deep rushing water and a soft sandy bottom. Horses struggled in vain to get the guns through, wheels sank, and the water eddied over the gun muzzles and limber boxes. The guns were dragged back and sent off to the Almatamak bridge, while Bouat's chasseurs and linesmen began to climb the cliff.

There were no Russians at the top to interfere with them. The battalion at Ululuk village had all its attention riveted on three French warships—the *Megère*, *Cacique*, and *Canada*—that had steamed up opposite the gap in the cliffs below the village, and were steadily shelling it. The Russians expected presently to see boatloads of men coming ashore.

When it was seen that Bosquet's Division was going

up the heights, the welcome order was given for the main body of the Allies to advance. The long strain of enduring fire without replying was over at last. Columns and lines re-formed, and the united armies moved in stately march towards the belt of enclosures along the Alma. The chasseurs covering the French columns on the right were the first to open fire. They dashed forward with a brisk crackle of rifles, searching the trees and fences with showers of Minié bullets. A few shots came from the enclosures in reply. The Russian artillery thundered from the heights, but the allied batteries were still limbered up, the teams at the walk keeping pace with the infantry advance. The dark-green coated riflemen in the British front held their fire till they were close to the vineyards.

As the British right approached the village of Burliuk the wooden houses suddenly burst into flame. It was like an effect at a firework display, so rapidly did the conflagration sweep along the wooden roofs and vine-wreathed balconies. The timber was no doubt very dry with the summer sun, but it appears that steps had also been taken by the Russians to ensure the rapid spread of the fire. The destruction of the village seemed to show that they meant to attempt no prolonged stand on the lower bank of the river, and were anxious only to bar the approach to the bridge by making the main village street an avenue of flame.

It was about two o'clock when Bosquet's Division began to scale the heights. The Zouaves of

D'Autemarre's Brigade scrambled to the crest in a way that surprised those who watched them from the fleet. The first of the guns stuck fast in the steep cart-track, but Zouaves and linesmen set to work to help the horses to drag them up, and two field-pieces were over the crest almost as soon as the first of the Zouaves. The battalion from Ulukuk moved out to oppose this unexpected advance from a point where any hostile attack was so far believed to be impossible, and brought four light guns into action at long range. Mentschikoff, miles away to the eastward on the Kurgane Hill, heard the firing and saw the cannon smoke of the fight on the seaward cliffs. In sudden alarm at the danger it suggested to his flank, he rode westward over the rolling crests of the plateau with a small escort, thus abandoning all general control of the battle for a while, and leaving the Russian army without a commander. His subordinates had to act on their own initiative, and some of them awaited orders that never came.

One of them, General Kiriakoff, had been posted in the morning with a division of eight battalions on the river-side west of Burliuk, below a swell of the plateau crowned by an unfinished tower with a semaphore apparatus on its top. The tower gave the height the name of "Telegraph Hill," by which this ridge of the plateau is known in narratives of the battle. When Kiriakoff saw Bosquet's columns moving towards the western heights he became anxious about this flank attack, and without waiting for orders he withdrew from the river bank, and brought his battalions

up to the crest of the Telegraph ridge. When he saw that the French were crowning the heights he began to march towards the scene of this engagement. About the same time St. Arnaud, anxious to assist Bosquet, ordered the divisions of Canrobert and Prince Napoleon, which were marching towards the crossing of the Alma below the Telegraph Hill, to move farther westward and ascend the heights near Almatamak.

The result was that the British army alone was left to deal with the Russian main position in the pass behind Burliuk and on the slopes of the Kurgane Hill. The two divisions that formed the front line of the attack were the 2nd on the right, under De Lacy Evans, and the Light Division on the left, under Sir George Brown. Both of these officers had seen service in the Peninsular War and in the British campaign of 1814 in the United States. But Evans had had a larger experience. He had been at Waterloo, and for years he had commanded the Anglo-Spanish Legion in the Carlist War, and had commanded in chief in hard-fought battles in the north of Spain. He was moving on Burliuk when the village suddenly burst into a mass of flame, barring his direct way to the river and the heights beyond. He then broke up his division, sending one brigade (Pennefather) round the place to the left, and the other (Adams) by a long detour to the right. Brown, with the Light Division moving forward without any such delay, was first into the enclosures along the river between Burliuk and Tarchanlar. The riflemen

in his front cleared the vineyards and orchards very quickly of the Russian skirmishers, who nowhere made any determined stand. On his right Pennefather's Brigade advanced more slowly, coming under a heavy artillery fire from the batteries in the sloping hollow beyond the bridge of Burliuk. For the moment Brown's regiments had an easier task. As they struggled through the rushing current of the Alma and reached its farther shore, they were sheltered from any heavy fire by the rise of the ground in their immediate front.

As they gained the shore, barrack-yard methods asserted themselves for a moment. Adjutants and sergeant-majors were busy placing markers to re-form the battalions in rigid lines; but the eagerness of battle was now taking possession of the men, and there was a cry of "Get forward—get forward anyhow!" and the regiments began to push up the green slope, re-forming as they went. Perhaps a little less haste would have given better results.

On the left of the division, Buller's Brigade (77th, 88th, and 19th Regiments) did not advance much beyond the river bank. Buller, looking up the slopes of Kurgane, saw before him a mass of dark-coated helmeted infantry, and to its right the head of a strong cavalry column. Quite rightly he took it that his business was to guard the flank of the general advance against a possible counter-attack that might easily roll it up. With the 77th and 88th he lined a stony ridge and opened fire upon the nearest enemy. But his remaining regiment, the

19th, edged away to the right and joined the other brigade of the Light Division (under Codrington) in its rush up the hill. A regiment of Pennefather's Brigade, the 95th, also joined in the advance on this side, so that Codrington, as he rode up the slope amid a spatter of fire from the retiring Russian riflemen, had five battalions with him—19th, 33rd, 95th, 7th Royal Fusiliers, and 23rd Welsh Fusiliers. The men were rather huddled together, for there was not enough ground to form the two-deep line; but as they topped the first swell of the heights they had come under fire, not only from the Russian infantry, but from the heavy guns of the lower redoubt. Brown on the left of the brigade was trying to reduce the partial disorder to something more like a drill-book diagram. Codrington, with a truer instinct, felt that every moment of delay meant loss, and shouted, "Fix bayonets: advance!" To his left as he rode forward came Colonel Chester of the Royal Fusiliers, followed by his regiment, eager to get to close quarters with the enemy; and then the whole brigade surged up the hill, hardly firing a shot.

The green hillside sloped gently upwards to the terrace or shoulder, not quite five hundred yards away, where the low rampart of the redoubt rose against the skyline, now wrapped in cannon smoke, torn by the red flashes of its fourteen guns. Right and left of it the Russian Rifles were in action in a straggling line. On both sides of the redoubt through the smoke there were glimpses of the heads of infantry columns, each with a line of skirmishers on its flanks.

To the right were the four battalions of the Vladimir Regiment; to the left, two battalions of the Kazan men. Two more battalions of the Kazan Regiment had moved well down the slope to the right of the attack. Higher up the slope behind the redoubt, and still unseen by the attack, were two batteries and four battalions of the Ouglitz Regiment. Looking at the whole position one cannot help thinking that an umpire at a war game, or at manœuvres, would have declared the attack hopeless, and promptly put Codrington's whole brigade out of action. One can imagine him saying: "This will never do. You are proposing to attack an entrenched position, without any previous artillery preparation. You have not a gun to cover your advance. You are simply making a mad rush with five battalions, in no particular order, against an unbroken and unshaken enemy who holds the higher ground with a good field of fire, against which you have no cover; and against your five battalions he has fourteen entrenched guns, eight battalions in his front line, and four more close at hand in reserve. Your attack is a piece of madness."

But in real war a "piece of madness" sometimes gives unexpected results. In the field, tactical problems cannot be entirely settled by counting up numbers. Battalions in action are not the nerveless leaden blocks of the war game. The human element comes in. These dense masses of Russian infantry might indeed have borne down the thin lines of redcoats opposed to them, if they had crossed bayonets

with them and brought the bodily weight of the column to bear on the more slender formation ; but neither in men nor in officers on the Russian side were there the energy and dash that would have made such close conflict inevitable. There was lack of initiative in the leaders, and every movement was carried out at a slow step. This meant that there would be plenty of time for a fire fight before line and column met ; and in the column formation only a few men could fire, while in the line every rifle could come into action, and at such short ranges the fire of the rifle into such a target as the dense column meant heavy loss for the Russians. These were the conditions that decided the result.

The two columns of the Kazan Regiment, moving slowly down right and left of the redoubt, were soon stopped by the heavy fire that broke out in their front. The left column halted and exchanged fire with the thin red line of the Royal Fusiliers. The right column was not merely stopped but was driven back. Colonel Lawrence with the Rifles that had covered the advance sent showers of death-dealing bullets into its flank, while the 19th Regiment poured a steady fire into its front. The Kazan men, after a brief attempt to reply, turned and moved back up the slope. Meanwhile the crowd of soldiers that were following Codrington up the hill towards the redoubt were pushing on, undaunted by the blasts of canister and grape shot that tore through them, strewing the slope with dead and wounded. Suddenly the artillery fire slackened. As the rush of shouting men

reached the redoubt, it was seen that the enemy were withdrawing their guns. Covered by a handful of riflemen, teams of horses were struggling up the hill, dragging away the heavy cannon.

The first man to top the low rampart of the earthwork was a boy officer of the Welsh Fusiliers, Ensign Anstruther, bearing the Queen's colours of the regiment. As he proudly waved the flag he dropped dead, pierced by a Russian bullet. Sergeant Luke O'Connor of the same regiment snatched the colours and held it up while his comrades poured over the rampart. Struck by a bullet full in the breast he staggered and fell, and another soldier seized the colours. But O'Connor rose and, with the blood trickling down his tunic, claimed and resumed the task of bearing the regimental standard; and though more than once officers or comrades urged him to go to the rear and have his wound dressed, Sergeant O'Connor, pale and faint with loss of blood, insisted on carrying the colours to the end of the battle.*

General Codrington, waving his cap, leaped his horse into the redoubt through one of the embrasures. A brass howitzer abandoned in the work was claimed as a trophy by the Welsh Fusiliers. Another gun was secured by Captain Bell of the same gallant regiment. A single driver with three horses was dragging it away when Bell ran out, pistol in hand, caught the bridle of the leading horse, forced the driver to

* Sergeant O'Connor received the Victoria Cross and a commission, and rose to the rank of general before retiring from the active list.

dismount, and turned the gun back down the hill. Sir George Brown, the divisional commander, rode up at the moment. A general of the old, rigid red-tape school, instead of a word of congratulation to Bell, his greeting to the captain was a sharp "Rejoin your company, sir!"

The crowd of officers and men which had now gathered in the captured entrenchment came under fire from the upper slope of the hill. Two field batteries opened at short range, and the riflemen of the Vladimir and Ouglitz Regiments came into action with them. There had been severe losses during the rush up the hill, but the men now began to drop quickly. The work was cleared of the crowd, and the men partly took shelter under its outer face, replying to the enemy's fire with rifles resting on the breastwork, and partly began to form on the slope immediately below it. The loss in officers was particularly heavy, and this tended to produce disorganization. In the Welsh Fusiliers, Colonel Chester was shot dead, and 12 officers and nearly 200 men were killed or wounded. The 33rd Regiment had its colonel (Blake) badly wounded, and seven officers and 240 men killed or wounded. Webber, the colonel of the 95th, was killed, and the regiment lost 16 officers and more than 150 men. In all, the losses in the neighbourhood of the "Great Redoubt" amounted to some 900 officers and men.

If the support of fresh troops had been at hand, there is no doubt that the impulse of the first rush up the hill might have been renewed, and the attack carried on to its crest. But the stormers of the re-

doubt, torn by the pelting fire of the enemy's guns, unsupported by either artillery fire or infantry reinforcements, found themselves isolated on the hillside, exhausted by their gallant effort and crippled by their terrible losses. To their left Buller had at first moved forward the 77th and 88th, but at the sight of Russian cavalry formed on the shoulder of the hill the two battalions had halted and formed square, and the curve of the hillside and the driving smoke that hung low upon it hid from them the plight of their comrades at the redoubt.

The second line ought to have been across the river by this time, but it was lagging behind in the most unfortunate way. The Duke of Cambridge had actually halted his fine division of Guardsmen and Highlanders on the edge of the vineyards. It was no lack of courage that held him back, but he was busy arranging to march his long line through the enclosures without disorganizing its beautiful drill-book formation. The ground was so utterly unlike Hyde Park that it was a serious problem. To his right, near Burliuk, De Lacy Evans, a soldier experienced in war, had brought a couple of batteries into action against the guns in the sloping hollow beyond the bridge, and was pushing Pennefather's Brigade across the river to force the pass. Through the drifting battle smoke Evans saw the capture of the redoubt and the subsequent danger of Codrington's isolated and disorganized brigade. He took the responsibility of sending one of his officers to the duke to urge him to push forward at once. At the same

time Sir Richard Airey of Raglan's staff, on his own initiative, rode up to the Duke of Cambridge and told him that he must get across the river without delay. The Guards, with the Highlanders on their left, then moved through the enclosures in slow and stately fashion, re-formed line on the river bank, and forded the Alma.

But before they were across, the Great Redoubt had been retaken by the enemy. While the two batteries on the Kurgane crest still thundered against its captors, two massive columns of helmeted gray-coated infantry came moving slowly down the slope to right and left—the Ouglitz and Vladimir Regiments, each four battalions strong. The Vladimir men were led by two generals—Kvetzinski, the divisional commander of the troops on the Kurgane Hill; and Prince Gortschakoff, Mentschikoff's second in command. The Russians came on in a cloud of musketry smoke, for the front ranks and the skirmishers extended on the flanks were firing, and in the very heart of the columns excited young soldiers were discharging their muskets into the air. Codrington's men returned their fire, the surviving officers having got them into something like ordered lines. The Ouglitz Regiment, galled by this steady rifle fire, actually halted. The Vladimir Regiment might also have been stopped, but at the critical moment a British bugle sounded the retire, and the call was taken up along the line.

Subsequent inquiry showed that an unidentified mounted officer had given the order to a bugler of

the 19th. For a few moments there was confusion in the British line. Here, officers were calling out to their men to stand fast; there, others were bidding them obey the bugle call. As it rang out again and again, it was generally obeyed. Some of the men clung doggedly to the breastwork. A sergeant of the Welsh Fusiliers, standing up on it, called to his men, "Don't you hear the bugles? You *must* retire." As he spoke a bullet crashed through his brain; and the last of the men turned and went down towards the river. There was no panic flight, but a slow retirement, men turning to fire at the Vladimir men, who halted as they regained the breastwork.

Thus, after a first splendid success, matters were going badly on the allied left. With the French on the right the outlook was not much better. Bosquet's brigades, miles away towards the sea, were waiting to get up their guns, and had apparently failed to realize that they had no enemy in their front but the Minsk battalion near Ululuk, and that there was nothing to prevent the infantry pushing on along the heights. On Bosquet's immediate left, in the gullies of the bluffs above Almatamak, Canrobert's Zouaves and linesmen had climbed the heights and deployed on the plateau, but his guns were still in difficulties on the steep narrow cart-tracks below. Behind Canrobert, packed in the gullies and on the shelf of low ground along the river, were some 12,000 French soldiers, Prince Napoleon's Division and a brigade of Forey's. The opposition journalists of Paris accused the

prince of half-heartedness, and said he hung back from the fight; but the simple truth was that it was impossible for three divisions to mount simultaneously one narrow, steep hill-track, where the guns had almost to be lifted up by men dragging at limber, trail, and wheel.

The situation was dangerous in the extreme. Part of Canrobert's Division was on the top of the heights, deployed into line, with all its supports and artillery huddled on the steep slope below; and in its front, along the rising crest of the Telegraph Hill, General Kiriakoff had set in battle array eight battalions and two batteries, while eight battalions more, taken from the reserve by Mentschikoff himself, were moving round the Telegraph height to take Canrobert in flank. The Russian guns on Telegraph Hill were in action against the French front, and Canrobert could only reply with long-range rifle fire. On the advance of the heavy flanking column against his right, he drew back under the cover of the topmost swell of the plateau, lining the crest with his infantry, till the guns could arrive. Mentschikoff, having set his columns in motion against the French, had handed the command over to Kiriakoff, and was riding back to see how the battle was going on his right.

Here the Guards had crossed the river, and were moving up the slope, when the Scots Fusiliers were thrown into disorder and forced backward by the beaten mass of the Light Division descending upon them in a confused crowd. It was a moment when, if the Valdimir Regiment had charged boldly down,

there might have been disastrous results; but the Vladimirs, after a mere show of advancing, had again halted irresolutely. A strange thing had happened which was to alter the whole course of the battle.

Lord Raglan, gallant soldier as he was, could hardly claim to rank as a great general. Having put his lines in motion against the Russian position, he did not take any steps to control or direct their further action, but launched out on a piece of adventure that might easily have had an unfortunate ending; yet (as the chapter of accidents would have it, and against all reasonable probabilities) it enabled him to exercise a decisive influence on the fight, partly because the leadership of the Russian generals was so hopelessly bad that any unexpected incident was likely to upset all their arrangements.

As the Light Division crossed the river, Raglan with his staff, a score of riders in blue uniforms, had ridden down towards the river to the west of the burning village of Burliuk, passing Adams's Brigade on the way. He had then no British troops in front of him except a handful of riflemen who were driving the last of the Russian skirmishers out of the vineyards. Passing through these, Raglan and his staff forded the river and began to ride up a gully leading to the plateau. One of the officers was wounded by a Russian rifle ball, but as they rode up the party found no enemy barring their way. There was really no means of knowing whether or not they would come upon formed hostile lines at the top of the track they were ascending, and with a reckless disregard

of possibilities they all rode together without a single scout in advance of them.

As luck would have it, they reached the crest of the heights in the midst of the wide gap that separated the Russian left, under Kiriakoff, from the right, about the Kurgane Hill and the Sebastopol road. On the undulating plateau the horsemen found themselves strangely isolated. More than a mile away to the westward, behind the ridge of Telegraph Hill, Kiriakoff's guns were thundering against Canrobert. To this more distant part of the battle Raglan paid no attention; all his anxiety was for the nearer struggle. The roar of the guns in the roadway pass and on the crest of Kurgane, the reports of English batteries replying from beyond Burliuk, told him that the fight was hotly contested. He spurred up a little knoll and halted there, surrounded by his staff. They looked down into the heart of the conflict. It was a strange position for a commander-in-chief With his few comrades he was on the left rear of the enemy's centre. Below him the ground sloped to the road pass, and there he could see the Russian batteries in action and masses of reserves posted behind them. Beyond the hollow of the pass, through rifts in the cannon smoke, there were glimpses of the red lines struggling up the lower slopes of Kurgane, with the broken Light Division mingled with the Guardsmen on the right of the attack, higher up the massed battalions of the gray-coated Vladimir Regiment, and higher still the batteries on the crest.

To the Russians the sight of the blue-uniformed horsemen crowning the knoll between them and Telegraph Hill conveyed a disquieting impression. Red coats would have suggested Englishmen, but the blue staff uniform made the Russian officers think of the French flank attack, which they knew was developing along the seaward heights; and it seemed to them that this handful of riders would not be standing quietly on the hilltop unless they had an army behind them. This would mean that disaster had overtaken Mentschikoff, Kiriakoff, and the Russian left, and that the French attack would soon come pouring on to the ground about the Sebastopol road. This impression was strengthened when suddenly on the hilltop there appeared a couple of guns, which came promptly into action, firing on and enfilading the Russian batteries in the hollow of the pass by which the highroad climbs the hills.

"If we had only a couple of guns here!" Lord Raglan had exclaimed as he looked out from the knoll; and promptly two of his officers had ridden down to the river, found Captain Turner's battery fording it, and hurried up to the two leading guns; while another officer rode hard to the nearest infantry —Adams's Brigade west of Burliuk—with the news that they had only to press on and they would seize the centre of the enemy's position without firing a shot. So few gunners had come up with the two guns that some of the staff dismounted and helped to serve them. Never did two cannon produce a more

important effect. The strangeness of the event seemed to paralyze the Russians. A more enterprising enemy would have attacked and swept Raglan and his handful of officers and the section of artillery from the hilltop, but the daring group of officers and men was magnified by imagination into the vanguard of a victorious army; and as the cannon-shot crashed into the Russian batteries by the road, hurtling down from the higher ground on their flank and rear, the enemy's gunners began to limber up, and with much cracking of whips the guns were seen galloping to the rear, and Evans, with Pennefather's Brigade, began to force his way up the pass from the Burliuk crossing, the chief obstacle to his advance having been thus by a lucky chance swept away. The guns then opened on the Russian reserves in the direction of Kurgane Hill. The range was long for the smooth-bore pieces of the day, but this distant fire from hostile guns, presumably French, posted in the very centre of their position, helped to paralyze the energy of the Russian defence on the hill.

The Guards were now advancing up the slope of Kurgane. On the right the Scots Fusilier Guards, thrown into confusion by the retiring mass of the Light Division, and attacked by the close fire of the Vladimir Regiment, had at first been forced to give way. General Bentinck, who commanded the Guards Brigade himself, gave them the order to retire at a moment when the Russians were closing on the broken line. Here and there bayonets

had actually crossed, and the colours of the regiment were saved from imminent capture by one of the officers, Lord Lindsay, going to the rescue, pistol in hand, and shooting down the nearest of the enemy. In the brief struggle and the retirement the Guards lost heavily. They re-formed by the river bank, and moved forward again. By this time the Coldstreams and the Grenadiers had come into action to their left, and Colin Campbell, with the three plaided regiments of the Highland Brigade, was across the river and prolonging their line, while Codrington was re-forming the remnant of the Light Division.

Before he crossed the river, Campbell had addressed a brief, soldier-like speech to his Highlanders. "Now, men," he said, "you are going into action. Remember this: whoever is wounded—I don't care what his rank is—he must lie where he falls till the bandsmen come to attend to him. No soldiers must go carrying off wounded men. If any soldier does such a thing, his name shall be stuck up in his parish church. Don't be in a hurry about firing. Your officers will tell you when it's time to open fire. Be steady. Keep silence. Fire low. Now, men, the army will watch us. Make me proud of the Highland Brigade." Then he put himself at the head of the Black Watch on the right of the line, and gave the order, "Forward, 42nd!" As he came up the slope on the left of the Guards Brigade the Scots Guards were retiring, and the two other battalions were faced by advancing masses

of the enemy. The Duke of Cambridge, riding on the extreme left of the Guards, the centre-point of his division, spoke to the Highland general as he came up, and expressed a fear that the Guards would have to retire before the odds arrayed against them. "No, sir," replied Colin Campbell; "better that every man in Her Majesty's Guards should lie dead on the field than that they should turn their backs on the enemy."

But the dangerous crisis was now nearing its end. A hard-pressed fighting line is steadied and carried onward by new forces coming into action. While the Scots Fusiliers and the Light Division re-formed, the Grenadiers and Coldstreams, in evenly dressed lines, were exchanging fire at the shortest of ranges with the Vladimir and Kazan Regiments, and two other regiments were moving down upon their flank. Against these came the advance of the Highlanders, prolonging the line of the Guards. From that extended line there came a steady, well-directed fire which told with terrible effect on the Russian masses. Gortschakoff, at the head of the Vladimir men, had his horse killed under him, and, half stunned by the fall, staggered back to the redoubt, where he found General Kvetzinski. The latter tells in his report the impression that the situation at that moment made on his mind. He says that the numbers of the British seemed to increase, and they had brought into action forces superior to his own. The fact is that his own men locally outnumbered the attack, but packed in close columns they covered

less ground than the extended red lines, blazing with rifle flashes and wrapped in smoke, through which could be seen the long rows of tall bearskins to the right, the plumed bonnets of the three Highland regiments on the left. The lines gave an impression of superior force. He notes, too, that a "French battery" was firing into the Vladimir column from a hill to its left, and French columns were moving to cut off his retreat. The "French battery" he saw on the knoll was the British battery brought up by Raglan. From its presence the Russian general had jumped to the conclusion that the French would soon be upon his rear. The shots that now and then crashed into the sorely-tried Vladimir column came, however, not from Raglan's battery, but from British guns that had been brought up to a shoulder of the pass.

Suddenly it was seen that the Vladimir Regiment was retiring in a broken crowd, leaving the hillside strewn with gray heaps of dead and wounded. There was a ringing cheer from the Guards, an order to advance firing, and the whole line went forward. On their left the Highlanders were also going up the hill with levelled bayonets. The Russians were everywhere giving way. The Grenadiers marched proudly over the recaptured redoubt. The Highlanders carried with a rush the smaller work to the eastward of it. The British line was well up towards the summit of Kurgane. Evans with his left brigade had forced the pass of the highroad. Beyond it his other brigade appeared in a long red

line, topping the knoll where Raglan had been watching the crisis. The Third Division began to ford the river near Burliuk. Farther up towards Tarchanlar, Lord Lucan, without waiting for orders, moved across and up the hill with his 1,000 horsemen and his light artillery.

On the western heights at the same time impending disaster had been turned into success. When Kiriakoff's advance led Canrobert to withdraw his division over the edge of the plateau, a fierce attack by the Russians might have inflicted deadly loss on the French army, huddled among the gullies at the top of the cliffs and crowded on the tracks below, where it was impossible to form a fighting front or bring guns into action. But the Russian general had hesitated strangely. He seemed to think that all he need do was to keep his battalions formed to meet any further attempt of the enemy to advance. He moved them out into a long line, with their right towards the northern edge of the high ground. Suddenly they came under a heavy artillery fire. His report shows that he thought he was being bombarded from the fleet. The fire really came from a couple of French batteries that had been brought up the pass above Almatamak, and had come into action with the gun muzzles just peeping over the crest of the wide gully by which the hill road ascends. The effect on Kiriakoff was to lead him to withdraw his battalions from what he expected would be the fire of hundreds of naval guns. And the arrival of artillery support was followed immediately by

the reappearance of Canrobert's Division on the hill-top. As the French infantry again opened fire, Kiriakoff began to retire eastwards and then southwards towards the Sebastopol road. He had seen Adams's Brigade crowning the heights above the Burliuk pass, and masses of infantry streaming back from the Kurgane Hill. Bosquet's Division was now marching to support Canrobert. The Turkish Brigade was up on the plateau. Prince Napoleon's men and one of Forey's brigades were up. The greater part of the French army was on the heights. Canrobert's Division led the advance, but so rapid was Kiriakoff's retirement that on the Telegraph ridge nothing was left but two companies of Russian riflemen. These had remained near the semaphore tower, apparently because they had been forgotten, and had no orders. Canrobert's men broke into a wild rush for the ridge. Regiments of Zouaves and linesmen were racing for the honour of planting the tricolour on the tower. They were met by a spatter of rifle fire in front, and on their right front by a burst of artillery fire from a battery that Kiriakoff had placed on the prolongation of the Telegraph ridge to cover his retreat. The unfortunate Russian riflemen were simply overwhelmed in a rush of bayonets. The scaffolding was still standing round the unfinished tower, and three regimental standard-bearers climbed it. Lieutenant Poitevin of the 39th of the line and Sergeant Fleury of the 1st Zouaves were killed by cannon-shots as they planted the flags of their regiments on the top of the building.

It was nearly five o'clock. The Russians were everywhere retiring, French and British batteries sending a shower of cannon-shot and shrapnel into the gray columns; but there was no pursuit. The 3,000 cavalry that had been kept idle all day on the eastern and southern slopes of Kurgane now covered the retreat. The weary victors were well satisfied to hold the ground they had won.

The battle of the Alma was begun on a definite, well-conceived plan, but fought out in a way that showed throughout a singular want of co-operation between the Allies, the result of there being no strong central direction. The French flank movement was not pushed home till the event had been already decided by sheer hard fighting, plus a happy accident, on the British side. The superiority in numbers possessed by the Allies was thrown away by the wide division of their forces. The French encountered no serious opposition, yet they were very slow in their final advance. They showed themselves much more active and enterprising in the Italian campaign a few years later. The British had to face equal, if not superior, numbers in their attack on the Russian right, but the attack was made in a way that exposed isolated divisions to disaster. In this fight on the Kurgane Hill it is remarkable how long Russians and British stood up against each other, exchanging a deadly fire at point-blank range. In the result we see the superiority of the line over the column, and we shall see how linear tactics gradually became the rule for all armies, as improvements

in the rifle increased the rapidity and accuracy of fire.

In the South African War there was frequent exaggeration in the newspaper comments on the "terrible losses" incurred in modern battles. At Colenso and at Magersfontein we had some 800 killed and wounded, but in the three hours' fight on the Alma heights the British lost nearly 3,000 men, mostly in the struggle on the Kurgane Hill. The French reported a loss of 1,300. The Russian losses were over 5,000 men killed and wounded, including five generals. The heaviest loss fell on the two regiments that had held the ground about the Grand Redoubt. The gallant Vladimir Regiment only gave way after losing 48 per cent. of its strength, 47 officers and 1,260 men. Every officer above the rank of captain in its four battalions was down. The Kazan Regiment which fought beside it lost 28 officers and 1,220 men. The Russians left two guns in the hands of the British, but no unwounded prisoners. The wounded of both sides fared badly. The elaborate ambulance organization of armies, that has done so much to diminish the miseries of war, was still in the future. In the British army each regiment had its surgeon, and the bandsmen were detailed to attend to the wounded in action. But there were no ambulances or stretcher-bearers, no trained hospital staff. Aseptic surgery was still unknown. The unfortunate wounded were laid in rows on the field, and received help from a mere handful of doctors. Later, the sailors improvised stretchers with oars

and canvas, and in the course of several days of hard work conveyed the survivors of them on board the fleet. The French and British were sent to Scutari; the Russians, under a flag of truce, to Odessa.

One more comparison between past and present. If the Alma had been fought under existing conditions, London would have known on the morning of the battle that an engagement was imminent. Late editions of the evening papers would sell by tens of thousands, and convey the news of the victory with some details of the fighting. Next day's morning papers would give columns of space to elaborate narratives of the day. But how did the news actually reach the people of London in 1854?

The battle took place on Wednesday, September 20th. Ten days went by before London knew that it had been fought. Late in the afternoon of Saturday the 30th Mr. Harrison, the publisher of the *London Gazette*, was at his office in St. Martin's Lane, when he was told by a messenger that the Duke of Newcastle, the Secretary for War, wanted to see him immediately at Downing Street. Harrison hurried to Whitehall, and found the duke in a state of joyful excitement. "We have such glorious news," he said; "but how are we to let the public know it on a Saturday evening, when there are no papers?" and he produced a telegram from the British ambassador at Constantinople. It had been sent off by messenger on September 23rd, to be put on the wires at Belgrade, the nearest point where a tele-

graph office was available. The messenger had ridden over the Balkans, and through Bulgaria and Servia, taking a week for his journey, and got his message on the wire at Belgrade at nine that morning. This first report exaggerated the Russian strength, understated the British loss, and made mistakes about the time of events, besides turning the two earthworks on Kurgane Hill into an "entrenched camp." It ran as follows :—

"The entrenched camp of the Russians, containing 50,000 men, with a numerous artillery and cavalry, on the heights of the Alma, was attacked on the 20th inst. at 1 p.m. by the allied troops, and carried by the bayonet at half-past three, with a loss on our side of about 1,400 killed and wounded, and an equal loss on the side of the French. The Russian army was forced to put itself in full retreat."

Harrison proposed that it should be printed in a special *Gazette*, and that copies should be sent to the theatres to be read to the audiences from the stage. At some of the theatres the announcement put a sudden end to the performance. Greville in his "Memoirs" tells how, as he passed the Adelphi, he saw the audience come rushing out cheering for the victory and eager to spread the news. A note added by Lord Newcastle to the dispatch had warned the public that detailed reports could not be expected for some days. On the Sunday a supplement to the *Gazette* published a short telegram from Lord Raglan. Then England waited for many days for the terrible lists of the 3,000 killed and wounded.

## CHAPTER II.

### SOLFERINO.

*June* 24, 1859.

AFTER the Alma, England became familiar enough with the tidings of war and battle. In quick succession there came the news of Balaklava and Inkermann, and there was the year-long siege of Sebastopol. After the peace with Russia there was a brief campaign in Persia, and then for some two years the fierce struggle of the Indian Mutiny, with its countless episodes of heroism and horror. Then Europe was once more the scene of a great war in 1859, when Napoleon III., taking up the policy of the First Empire, sent his armies into Northern Italy to drive out the Austrians and substitute French for Austrian influence south of the Alps.

Piedmont, under King Victor Emmanuel and his minister, Count Cavour, had taken the lead in the movement against the Austrian domination in Italy, and Cavour had worked hand in hand with Napoleon III. since the day when a Piedmontese contingent, under La Marmora, had been sent to the Crimea. Napoleon provoked the quarrel with Austria as

soon as he had made some progress with the reorganization and rearmament of his army, begun after the Russian War. The most important change was the introduction of rifled field artillery. The work of designing and manufacturing the new guns was carried through very quietly—almost secretly—in the French arsenals, and the possession of these long-ranging cannon gave an undoubted advantage of great value to the French in the campaign of Northern Italy. In Forey's fight with the Austrians at Montebello, one of his batteries of rifled guns put three of the enemy's batteries out of action—the French gunners shooting as coolly and as safely as if they were on a practice range, for the projectiles from the Austrian smooth-bore guns could not reach them.

The war was begun on April 26th by the Austrian army from Pavia, under Count Gyulai, entering Piedmontese territory and advancing towards Turin. Gyulai hoped to strike at King Victor Emmanuel's little army before it could be joined by its French allies, some of whom were marching over the Alps by the Mont Cenis Pass, while the rest were being transported by sea to Genoa. The Emperor Napoleon was to command in person the combined armies. His landing at Genoa was one of the golden days of his chequered life. He was received with a wild outburst of enthusiasm. Guns roared their salute, church bells pealed, shouting crowds lined the quays and crowded the decks and rigging of the ships, and flowers were strewn on the water before his gilded

barge as he was rowed ashore. With his arrival came news that the Austrians, after three days on Piedmontese soil, were retiring into Lombardy. Gyulai had learned that Victor Emmanuel had already been heavily reinforced, and he had therefore decided to abandon his march on Turin and take up a position on the Ticino to defend Lombardy and the approach to Milan.

On June 4th Napoleon fought the great battle of Magenta, drove the Austrians from the Ticino, and then entered Milan in triumph. The Austrian army retreated across the Mincio, evacuating Lombardy, and turning to bay on the frontier river of Venetia, with the fortresses of Mantua and Peschiera on its left and right. The allied armies followed up this retirement with cautious deliberation. It had been expected that the Austrians would dispute the passage of the rivers that flow from the Alps to the Po; but the line of the Adda, the Oglio, and the Chiese were in turn found to be abandoned. Before the cavalry thrown out in front of the French advanced guards a screen of Austrian, Croat, and Hungarian horsemen retired steadily. At the crossing of the Chiese all touch of the enemy was lost, and report said the Austrians would not fight till the crossing of the Mincio.

On June 23rd the French crossed the Chiese with La Marmora's Italians on their left. The centre of the allied advance was formed of the 2nd Corps, veterans of Algeria, under MacMahon, now bearing the title of Duke of Magenta; and the 1st Corps, under Baraguay d'Hilliers, the son of a marshal

of the First Empire, and who had himself served under the great Napoleon as a young officer. Behind these came the regiments of the Imperial Guard, forming a picked army corps under St. Jean d'Angely.

On the right were the 3rd Corps, under Canrobert, and the 4th, under Niel. The total fighting strength of the Allies was 151,200 men, of whom 15,500 were cavalry. The artillery numbered 370 guns.* It was the largest and best-equipped army that had marched to battle since the great days of the First Empire.

Amongst its auxiliary arms was a balloon detachment, directed by Monsieur Godard, a famous aeronaut of the day. Godard joined MacMahon at the little town of Castiglione in the forenoon of June 23rd, and was ordered to make an ascent and reconnoitre the country in front. The cavalry patrols sent into the hills towards the Mincio had reported that they had met only small parties of the enemy's horsemen, who had everywhere promptly retired before them. It was a hot summer day, with a clear sky and hardly a breath of wind, and instead of going up at the end of an anchored cable, Godard risked a free ascent, inflating his balloon just inside the outpost line. A staff officer went up with him, and the great white globe drifted slowly high in air over Castiglione, while the occupants of the car searched the country with their telescopes.

* The Piedmontese contingent, under King Victor Emmanuel and General La Marmora (included in these totals), numbered 44,700 men, of whom 6,300 were cavalry, and 132 guns (smooth bores).

They had a magnificent view. Northwards the landscape was bounded by the snowy Alpine range; closer at hand the Lake of Garda displayed its shining expanse of sunlit waters. The Austrian fortress of Peschiera could be plainly seen at the point where the Mincio runs out of the lake, and the course of the river could be traced by looking away to the south-east, where far off, near its junction with the Po, the still more famous fortress of Mantua could be dimly seen amid the hot haze that hung over its girdle of lakes and marshes. To the southward extended the plain of Medole, cut up with irrigation canals, and with its gray-green olive groves, darker plantations of mulberries and fields of maize and rice, and expanses of pasture-land, amid which here and there were to be seen the square church towers of the white villages. In front from the shores of the Lake of Garda, between the northern part of the plain and the line of the Mincio, rose a labyrinth of rocky hills, running up into craggy crests. On a bold summit four miles away in front of Castiglione clustered the houses of Solferino, and beside them was the lofty tower, on the highest point of the hill, known as the Spia d'Italia (the Spy of Italy), on account of the wide prospect commanded from its battlements. There was no glimpse of an enemy to be seen on hills or plain, no rising dust-cloud to mark the march of troops on the sun-scorched roads. The balloon descended with information that the country between the French outposts and the Mincio must be clear of the enemy. No serious

fighting need be expected till the crossing of the river.

On June 22nd there was concentrated along the eastern bank of the Mincio, from Peschiera to the bridge of Goito, an Austrian army of 133,000 men, including 6,500 splendid cavalry, and 413 guns. It was made up of the troops that had retired from Lombardy, large reinforcements drawn from the Austrian Empire, and smaller contingents from the garrisons of Northern Italy. The young Emperor Francis Joseph was in personal command, with Field-Marshal Count Hess acting as his chief of the staff. The corps concentrated on the Mincio were divided into two subordinate armies. The 1st Army, on the left, under Count Wimpfenn, included the following corps :—

| *Corps.* | *Commanders.* | *Men.* | *Guns.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2nd . . . | Prince Liechtenstein . . | 17,700 | 56 |
| 3rd . . . | Prince Schwarzenberg . . | 17,900 | 72 |
| 9th . . . | General Schaffgotsche . . | 18,700 | 64 |
| 10th . . . | General Wernhardt . . . | 20,700 | 72 |
| 11th . . . | General Weigl . . . . | 12,500 | 48 |

In the 2nd Army, on the right, under Count Schlick, were the following :—

| *Corps.* | *Commanders.* | *Men.* | *Guns.* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1st . . . | Count Clam Gallas . . . | 15,200 | 56 |
| 5th . . . | Count Stadion . . . . | 19,600 | 60 |
| 7th . . . | General Zobel . . . . | 15,700 | 48 |
| 8th . . . | General Benedek . . . | 20,100 | 72 |

Late on the 22nd there was a sudden change of plans. It was supposed the French were not yet

across the Chiese, and it was decided to recross the Mincio next day and attack them, while they were passing the Chiese, on the 24th. The pontoon bridges on the Mincio were still in position. On the 23rd, while Godard was reporting "no sign of the enemy," the heads of the Austrian columns were crossing the twelve bridges of the Mincio. By that evening, all unknown to the French, several corps of the 2nd Army were in the hills south of the Lake of Garda, and the 1st Army had pushed well forward in the plain. The Austrian orders for next day were to march to the Chiese; those of the Allies to advance to the Mincio. Thus the two armies were moving to an inevitable collision.

Long before sunrise on June 24th the Allies had resumed their advance. On the left, near the Lake of Garda, moved the Piedmontese in three columns, preceded by cavalry patrols. They expected to be before Peschiera in the afternoon, and to summon the place and make the first preparations for besieging it, as they had done in the campaign of 1848. In the centre Baraguay d'Hilliers was marching on Solferino. His corps was to reach the Mincio by the hill roads. Behind him was the Imperial Guard, coming up from Monte Chiaro; and to his right MacMahon's Corps, moving from Castiglione on Guidizzolo by a road running below the margin of the hill country. On the right in the plain Niel was marching on Medole, and behind him came Canrobert, part of whose corps was still passing the pontoon bridges on the Chiese.

The Emperor Napoleon had spent the night at Monte Chiaro. One of his aides-de-camp, General Cotte, had died of heat apoplexy, and Napoleon and the headquarters staff so little expected a great battle that morning that they remained at Monte Chiaro to assist at the funeral service and requiem mass for their comrade in the village church. The service had hardly begun when there was a sound of galloping horses in the village street, and two staff officers entered the church with urgent messages for the emperor. One came from Baraguay d'Hilliers, the other from MacMahon. They reported that the Austrians were in force on the hills from the lake to Solferino and Cavriana, and strong columns were advancing in the plain. A great battle was imminent. The emperor left the church and drove to Castiglione in hot haste, with his staff and escort galloping after him. Castiglione stands on a rising ground, and the square bell-tower of its church commands a wide view. Napoleon went up to the belfry with some of the staff to take a general survey of the Austrian positions.

On the hills in front the enemy's artillery was in action from Solfernio northwards towards San Martino, and southwards in the direction of Cavriana. Masses of white uniformed infantry were seen here and there advancing over the ridges. Between Castiglione and Solferino the three divisions of the 1st Corps were being directed by Baraguay d'Hilliers to the attack of the outlying ridges in front of Solferino, L'Admirault and Forey's Divisions leading, Bazaine's

in support. To the right MacMahon was fighting his way towards Cavriana. Farther away in the plain there was a separate battle in progress around Medole, where Niel was in action with Schaffgotsche's Corps.

The fighting had begun on this side soon after sunrise. Niel had marched on Medole in the summer twilight. He had no expectation of a fight, and the closely cultivated level country through which he marched allowed only a restricted view. So when a crackle of fire in front, lasting only a few minutes, was followed by a message from his advanced guard reporting that a small party of Austrian cavalry had been met with and driven in, he counted the affair as an unimportant skirmish with a reconnoitring detachment left far in the rear of the enemy's retreat. But then came news that the Austrians held Medole with infantry and cannon, and as Niel deployed his leading division for the attack on the place, there came the booming of artillery from the left, and with the field-glass smoke clouds were seen on the outlying ridges of the hills towards Solferino, four miles away. This was a fairly clear indication that he had no mere belated rearguard in front of him, but that the Austrians were in force on a wide front. It was an unpleasant revelation that all the information supplied from headquarters was wrong. The enemy had challenged battle on ground he was supposed to have definitely abandoned. And the dead level of the plain in front, with the view narrowed in every direction by plantations, might conceal overwhelming numbers of opponents.

War maps and battle plans, with their definite presentment of the positions occupied by both sides over leagues of ground, are misleading, unless we remember that, whatever the aeroplane and the dirigible may do for generals of coming days, those of the past had to judge the situation and make their decisions in the midst of what Sir Lonsdale Hale has happily described as the "fog of war." Niel, with his single corps thrown forward in the plain, was for a while utterly in the dark as to what was in front of him. He decided to clear the enemy out of Medole and find out what was behind it, sending back messengers to ask Canrobert (who was crossing the Chiese) to come to his support, and protect his right from a possible turning movement on that side, and he sent a staff officer to get in touch with MacMahon on his left.

Medole, held only by an Austrian vanguard of two battalions, two guns, and a few hussars, was not cleared of the enemy for some time. Colonel Urs, who commanded there, disputed every street and house, and was only driven out after enduring and inflicting heavy loss. Niel was no sooner in possession than he was attacked in turn, Schaffgotsche making determined efforts to recapture the place. Canrobert seemed to be hanging back, and Niel for a while thought his colleague had left him in the lurch. But Canrobert had to get his corps across the Chiese, and then move forward very circumspectly and slowly, because he had, whilst on the march, received information that an Austrian

column, 25,000 strong, was on his right, and spent some time watching for and preparing to meet this non-existent force. Only detachments of cavalry showed themselves on this side. The misleading information appears to have come to the imperial staff through a secret service agent, and was based on a plan actually entertained but not executed by the Austrians.

On the left of Niel's battle-ground, about Medole, a wide gap separated him from MacMahon and the 2nd Corps. The Emperor Napoleon, immediately after his survey of the field from Castiglione, temporarily closed this gap by sending the cavalry of the Guard with Desvaux and Partonneaux's cavalry divisions to take post between Niel and MacMahon. The latter, with the 2nd Corps, had been stopped on his march towards the high ground of Cavriana. The enemy in his front was making a determined stand, and the emperor, who rode over to his position, agreed that for the present he must be content to hold his ground and protect the right flank of Baraguay d'Hilliers's attack on Solferino. The Imperial Guard was brought up to Castiglione to form a reserve for this attack. Baraguay had won the outlying ridges in front of the main plateau, and brought his artillery into action against the walled cemetery of Solferino and the ground near the "Spia" tower, and formed up L'Admirault and Forey's Divisions for a first effort to carry the heights.

To King Victor Emmanuel on the allied left a request was sent to detach one of his divisions to sup-

port the attack on Solferino. But the Piedmontese king and his chief of the staff, La Marmora, had already discovered that they had so much work to do that they could not spare even a single battalion. The Piedmontese had marched at sunrise in three columns—Cucchiari's Division away to the extreme left by the lake, Mollard in the centre, Fanti on the right nearest to the French. The country in front was supposed to be quite clear of the enemy. Nevertheless La Marmora sent strong advanced guards well to the front, and towards seven o'clock these came in contact with Benedek's troops moving out over the hills that look down on the lake to the westward of Pozzolengo. The Italian detachments were everywhere driven back. Cucchiari had brought up his whole division to their support, to the high ground west of San Martino. After some severe fighting Benedek drove him from the heights, and he fell back to the railway. Benedek then solidly occupied the high ground from San Martino, by the hamlet of Rocco, to Madonna della Scoperta, just north of Solferino, and there was a lull in the fighting while the Piedmontese massed for a new attack.

The Austrian emperor and Count Hess, who acted as his military adviser, had at first thought that they were in touch only with French advanced guards covering the crossing of the Chiese. They soon realized that the Allies were farther forward than they had expected, and that they had to deal with the whole of the French and Piedmontese armies. Of the seven Austrian army corps that had crossed

the Mincio, four were already in action, three more close at hand. Two corps that, if they had been available, might have secured a victory for Austria were still near Mantua. A plan for the battle was quickly arranged. On the right, along the margin of the hill country, Schlick, with the four corps of the 2nd Army (1st, 5th, 7th, and 8th), was to hold the French centre and the Piedmontese. On the Austrian left, in the plain, Wimpfenn, with the 1st Army (3rd, 9th, and 11th Corps), was to roll up the French right, and break in upon the flank of their central attack against Solferino. So far only one corps was up to the front on this part of the field—the 3rd, under Schaffgotsche ; but the two other corps were coming up, and there was a fair chance of overwhelming Niel before Canrobert could support him. Here the fate of the day turned on Niel's tenacity.

The French plan was of a more elementary type. Napoleon had had his attention riveted on Solferino. To seize that commanding point in the Austrian centre appeared to him to be the simplest way to victory. He left Niel to take care of himself on the right, and staked everything on a series of fierce asaults on the natural fortress of which Solferino and Cavriana were like two towering bastions, with the ridges between them and to the north as their ramparts. The Austrians had carried out more than one series of peace manœuvres on this very ground, and looked on their hill fortress as impregnable. It says much for the fighting quality of the French that they were able to force it by repeated and costly attacks. The army

that fought under Napoleon's command at Solferino was certainly the best that the Second Empire ever possessed.

There was a long struggle for Solferino, and the fate of the hilltop village hung in the balance for hours. Before eight o'clock, when the Emperor Napoleon reached Castiglione, the Austrian outposts had been driven from the foothills in front, and the French rifled artillery had come into action against the village and the heights at a range of 2,500 yards. Under the eyes of the emperor two columns of assault, led by Generals Forey and D'Alton, moved forward to the attack, preceded by a dense line of skirmishers. They worked their way through the broken ground below the main ascent to the village under a rain of bullets and shells. Forey was slightly wounded; two of his staff were killed beside him. At last the moment came when further progress was stopped by the storm of hostile fire. D'Alton fell back before a column of Austrians that menaced his flank; Forey barely held his own. Then six battalions of the Guard, under General Manèque, were thrown into the fight, and Bazaine's Division was seen climbing the slopes towards the walled cemetery.

The battle for the heights now became a close conflict between great masses of men. The battles of more recent wars were decided by fire, and opposing lines faced each other at long ranges, each making such good use of cover that for hours neither saw much of its enemy. But the methods of the Napoleonic wars were still in honour in the days of Solferino.

Around the village the defenders were arrayed in deep masses of white-coated infantry, with their batteries in the intervals, and the green-uniformed Tyrolese riflemen held the loopholed houses and farmsteads on the crest. From the foothills to the westward the shells of the French artillery came screaming through the air, bursting with deadly effect over the close-formed ranks, battering the walls of the cemetery, crashing into the roofs of the houses. Up the slopes came long lines of skirmishers wrapped in eddying clouds of powder smoke, and through this screen would burst, now here, now there, the head of a massive storming column, blue-coated, red-trousered linesmen or bearskinned guardsmen, a forest of bristling bayonets, with the tricolours flying over them, drums beating, bugles sounding, and the swords of the mounted officers waving them onward. For every man in that moving mass the one idea would be to cross the fire-swept ground in front as soon as might be, and bring the bayonet and the weight of marshalled ranks to bear upon the enemy. But the head of the column would be at once the target of a concentrated short range fire. The front ranks would go down, those behind would press forward over them, till the moment when the strain of apparently useless loss, the fall of leaders, the confusion of struggling through the wreckage of the fight, would stop the advance, and men, instead of pushing on with the bayonet, would halt to fire, spread out into irregular groups, take cover in broken ground, and then fall back, rallying to the colours, each of which

had probably already passed from the hands of its original bearer to those of an eager substitute. For the battle flags drew fire, and many a gallant life was sacrificed in bearing them in the close fight.

As each attack was repulsed another would be pushed on with fresh troops or the rallied battalions of an earlier onset. Thus it was that twice the cemetery was attacked, and twice Bazaine's men were beaten back with loss, only to come on again after the artillery had widened the breaches of the wall. At the third onset the column poured over the barrier like a flood, and swept the defenders before it at the bayonet point. Then Forey's Division and the Imperial Guard fought their way over the crest near the "Spia" tower, and the tricolour was displayed from its lofty roof.

Away towards the Garda Lake the Italians had again attacked the heights of San Martino, and once more had been hurled back by Benedek's white-coats. On the right, below the ridges towards Cavriana, MacMahon's African Corps was in hot fight with the Austrian left centre. Still farther away Niel was doggedly holding his own to the eastward of Medole, and Canrobert was at last coming into action on his right. Along the miles of opposing front nearly 800 guns were roaring out in a cannonade that was heard like far-off thunder in distant cities. Mantua and Verona heard it plainly. Far-off Milan caught the sound like the muttering of a coming thunderstorm.

After the capture of the cemetery and the "Spia"

height there was still a hard fight for Solferino. The place was taken by the Imperial Guard, but every house, every enclosure had to be stormed with the bayonet. Austrians and Frenchmen met hand to hand, and when at two o'clock it was at last in the possession of the French, streets, houses, gardens, and vineyards were thickly strewn with dead and wounded, which in many places lay in heaps. Some guns and a number of prisoners were taken, for the eastern side of the Solferino ridge is very steep, and accessible only by narrow paths along which rapid and ordered retirement was impossible.

When Solferino was lost the Austrian right centre still held the ridges of the plateau east of it from Cavriana towards San Martino. On the extreme right, round this latter position, the Italians, reinforced by Fanti's Division, were again attacking Benedek after a long lull in the fight. Once more the dogged Austrian commander of the 8th Corps, though fighting against superior numbers, flung back assault after assault. Along a spur that connects Solferino with Cavriana the Imperial Guard was advancing to a renewed attack on the Austrian centre, and MacMahon was pressing forward over the outlying ridges of San Cassiano and Monte Fontana, on the left of the Cavriana position. The village of San Cassiano was stormed, and the African regiments, Zouaves and Turcos, were flung against Monte Fontana.* The Turcos are the native infantry

* On Monte Fontana the Austrian infantry held shelter trenches, which had been dug a couple of years before during the annual

of Algeria—Arabs and Kabyles under French officers. They were first in the rush for the ridge; but fierce as was their onset, they were driven back by the Austrians with a heavy loss among the white officers. The half-savage Turcos dipped their hands in the blood of their fallen leaders, swore to avenge them, and came on again. This time the ridge was stormed with the bayonet, and scant quarter was given by the dark-skinned victors. Guns were dragged up to the crest to bombard Cavriana at short range. The wind had fallen, the heat had become almost unbearable, and the tired horses could hardly move the guns up the slope. The officers and men tugged at the traces, pushed at the wheels and axles, and at last the guns were almost carried to the top.

In the plain on MacMahon's right there was open ground, pasture-land with a few patches of wheat and maize. Here the Austrian cavalry had tried to break through the French line, and had been repulsed by several charges of Desvaux's squadrons. To the north-east of Medole Niel had 42 guns in line. The Austrians had been bringing their inferior artillery into action against this formidable battery, not in a mass, but piecemeal, only to be beaten in detail, batteries being sometimes silenced after firing only a few shots. This superiority in artillery enabled the French to beat off the repeated attacks made by Wimpfenn's infantry; and now that Canrobert's Corps

peace manœuvres. The battle was fought on ground where the Austrians had taken part in many such rehearsals of war.

was engaged, Niel was able to use part of his force to close the gap between his flank and the ground held by MacMahon, and assuming the offensive, established himself in the farm of Casa Nuova, the hamlet of Baite, and the village of Rebecco. The capture of this line of entrenched positions was a costly business. There was plenty of hand-to-hand fighting. A French regiment saw its colours disappear in one of these mêlées, and it was supposed that the flag had been captured, but after the fight it was found under a heap of dead.

Cavriana was now attacked by the Guards from the westward and by MacMahon from the south, and the Austrian centre was in serious peril. The Emperor Francis Joseph sent word to Wimpfenn to make one more effort to force back the French right, and then strike at MacMahon's flank and rear. Wimpfenn had lost his opportunity earlier in the day, when he had the advantage of numbers on his side. He had now to attack a line of strong positions, in which Niel had been reinforced by Canrobert's fresher troops. But the Austrians did their best. For an hour wave after wave of infantry broke upon the line of loop-holed buildings and walled enclosures from Casa Nuova to Rebecco, and surged round its flank, where the French cavalry charged furiously on the advancing enemy. This cavalry attack stopped the movement against the flank. Though the Austrians, formed in squares bristling with bayonets, held their own against the horsemen, the mere fact that they were thus forced to defend themselves brought the

flank attack to a standstill. The frontal attack was a disastrous failure.

The day was now going badly for Austria. Into the village of Cavriana there poured the converging columns of assault, and after a desperate street fight the Austrians were driven out. The centre was thus pierced, and a great wedge of victorious Frenchmen driven in between Schlick's army on the right and Wimpfenn's on the left. On the extreme right the fighting had again almost ceased, for once more Benedek had driven the Italians from the heights of San Martino. On the extreme left Wimpfenn had repulsed a determined attack made by Niel and Canrobert on Guidizzolo. But Count Hess and the Austrian emperor now realized that, with tens of thousands of French infantry and their terrible artillery crowning the central heights, to prolong the battle might be to invite an irreparable disaster.

They were actually issuing the orders for a retreat across the Mincio when a startling change came over the scene. Since two o'clock the sky had become more and more overcast, though the gathering clouds in no way diminished the oppressive heat. On the contrary, it seemed to become more intense. Men dropped in the ranks unwounded, but fainting or half dead with sudden heat-stroke. Then in a few minutes there came on a darkness like night, and a tremendous thunderstorm burst over the battlefield. The lightning came flash after flash in streaks of bluish flame, the rain descended in a deluge, mingled with driving gusts of hailstones, under which horses

broke away in mad fright, and men ceased firing and huddled together for shelter. Under the dark sky and through the driving rain it was impossible to see for more than fifty yards. For twenty minutes the battle ceased, except where here and there the drenched gunners still fired a few shots at random.

When the storm ended, as suddenly as it had begun, it was seen that all along the centre, in the hills, and on the left in the plain the Austrians had abandoned their positions. Covered by strong rear-guards, they were retiring in long columns towards the bridges of the Mincio. There was no attempt at pursuit. The French were too exhausted for any prolonged forward movement, now that the inspiring excitement of battle was gone. The men had had coffee and bread as they broke up from their bivouacs at three in the morning. For fourteen hours they had been marching and fighting, most of the time under almost tropical heat. They were glad enough to halt and begin cooking a meal of soup on the ground they had won.

But away towards the Lake of Garda the battle broke out again. The Piedmontese had renewed the attack on the San Martino heights. Benedek had received the order to retreat, but for the present he disregarded it. The French were so confident that he would soon have to give way that, desiring to leave the Piedmontese their full share in the glory of the victory, they did not intervene. And until after sun-down Benedek held his own. It was between eight and nine o'clock that he led in person

a sudden counter-attack, drove the enemy down the slopes, and then began his orderly and unmolested march back to Peschiera. As the rearguard evacuated San Martino the Piedmontese columns once more went up the heights, and their artillery flashed out through the gathering darkness of the summer twilight. An Austrian battery put in a few parting shots before finally limbering up and retiring from the eastern spur of the plateau.

San Martino is counted as a Piedmontese victory, and gives its name to a battleship of the Italian navy; but the plain truth is that this isolated battle above the lake was a splendid success for Benedek and the 8th Corps, who only abandoned their ground hours after the fighting to the southward had ceased, and in order to conform to the general retirement of their army. To his success that day Benedek owed the general command of the Austrian Army of the North in the war of 1866.

The losses on both sides had been heavy, though, in proportion to the large numbers engaged, not so serious as in the great battles of the First Empire and of the American Civil War. The Austrians had 13,100 men killed or wounded, and left in the hands of the French 8,600 prisoners and 13 guns. The heaviest loss fell on Stadion's Corps, the 5th, which held Solferino village and the heights around it. The corps lost 124 officers and 2,717 rank and file killed and wounded, and 1,597 taken prisoners. It says much for the fighting spirit of Stadion's officers that not one of them was among the prisoners.

The Allies lost 14,420 in killed and wounded. The heaviest proportional loss fell on the Piedmontese in their repeated unsuccessful attacks on San Martino. They lost 216 officers and 4,047 men. They left about 1,200 prisoners in the hands of Benedek, none of them officers. How victory hung in the balance on the southern flank, the fighting in the plain, is shown by the fact that there the Austrians took some 1,500 French prisoners. The sufferings of the thousands on thousands of wounded were terrible. The Austrians had carried off very few of their wounded in the retreat, and the Allies, with a most imperfect organization for the purpose, had to do all the work of clearing the battlefield. It was two days before the last of the wounded received even first aid. The horrors of the field of Solferino so impressed a civilian spectator, the Switzer Henri Dunant, that he devoted himself to the organization of the Red Cross movement for the help of the wounded in war, and as a result of his agitation on the subject the Geneva Convention was signed in 1864.

The losses among French officers of rank were heavy. Five generals were wounded—L'Admirault, Forey, Auger, Dieu, and Douay. Auger, who commanded Niel's artillery, died of his wounds. Thirteen colonels were killed at the head of their regiments or while serving on the staff. The death of one of these put an end to a famous race. Lieutenant-Colonel Junot, Duc d'Abrantès, killed while serving as chief of the staff to De Failly's Division of Niel's Corps, was the second and only

surviving son of Marshal Junot of the First Empire.

Within a few days of the battle of Solferino the armistice of Villafranca prepared the way for peace between France and Austria. A few weeks later the army of Italy marched in triumph into Paris, along the Boulevards, and through the Place Vendôme, where, at the base of the column that commemorates the glories of the first Napoleon, Napoleon III. sat on horseback surrounded by his staff, with a little boy dressed as a chasseur of the Guards before him on his saddle. It was the last great triumph of the Second Empire. The army, formed in the campaigns of Algeria, victorious in the Crimea and in Lombardy, was about to enter on a period of decline, when efficiency was to disappear in routine, and a fatal confidence in the glories of the past was made to cloak a hundred abuses. The boy Prince Imperial was never to reign. The emperor who had commanded at Solferino and ridden victoriously into Cavriana, amid the acclamations of his splendid Guardsmen and his African veterans, was to be remembered in a few years as " the man of Sedan."

## CHAPTER III.

### CHANCELLORSVILLE.

*May* 1863.

THE American War of Secession began with the shots fired against Fort Sumter in Charleston harbour on April 12, 1861, and ended with the surrender of General Lee's army at Appomattox Court-house on April 9, 1865, having lasted just four years. This prolonged conflict included some of the hardest fought battles in military history. It was in many ways unlike the other wars of the half-century. At the outset there were few regular soldiers or trained officers in the United States. The war was fought with improvised armies on both sides, and hundreds of thousands learned the soldier's work, not on the parade ground, but in the harder school of the bivouac and the battlefield. But the regular armies of Europe learned something from the experience of these volunteer armies, notably the new value of rapidly constructed entrenchments in fighting carried on with modern weapons.

In such a war men of merit win their way to high command more speedily than in regular armies of

long standing, where promotion depends on seniority as much as upon talent. So it was that on both sides a considerable number of able leaders fought their way to high command. The bitterness of the strife is now forgotten, and the names of the great generals of both Federal and Confederate armies belong to the roll of fame of which all Americans are proud, whether they are men of north, south, or west.

It was the good fortune of the Southern Confederacy to secure the devoted service of two soldiers who both had professional training and practical experience of war, and whose talents for command were of the highest. Robert Edward Lee, the Confederate commander-in-chief during the greater part of the war, ranks among the world's great captains. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson,* the most famous of his lieutenants, stands only second in renown to his chief. Chancellorsville, where Jackson met his death, was one of Lee's triumphs, and a typical battle of the War of Secession. It was also the prelude to the invasion of Pennsylvania, and the hard-fought battle of Gettysburg, which may be regarded as the decisive battle of the war.

In the summer of 1862 the United States Government was pressing steadily forward the policy of

* Thomas Jonathan Jackson was the general's name. At the first battle of Bull Run, before the tide of victory had turned in favour of the South, and when the Confederate lines were breaking before the Federal attack, General Bernard E. Bee called out to his men: "Look at Jackson's Brigade standing like a stone wall!" After this the brigade came to be known as "the Stonewall Brigade," and its general as "Stonewall Jackson."

isolating the Confederate States by maintaining a blockade of their ports on the Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, and gradually obtaining possession of the line of the Mississippi. But at the same time a vigorous effort was made to advance upon and capture Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. Although the Federals were able to invade Northern Virginia with superior numbers, Lee, ably seconded by Jackson, and with the aid of Stuart's genius as a cavalry leader, won a succession of victories, and was able himself to threaten Washington before the end of the summer campaign. The tactics of the Southern leaders were a splendid example of what may be called aggressive defence. They compelled the enemy to divide his forces, and successfully united their own against a locally inferior opponent at the critical point. Both sides fought well, but the result of the battles of 1862 was to give the Confederates a confidence in themselves and their leaders that immensely added to the fighting value of their armies. A further gain was that from the spoils of the battlefield they were able to improve their own armament and equipment. In the spring of 1862 many of the Confederate soldiers carried shot-guns, or old smooth-bore muskets; by the end of the year all had rifles.

At the end of the summer Lee had fallen back to the south bank of the Rapidan and the Rappahannock, and his army was massed along the latter river above and below the little town of Fredericksburg. The Federal "Army of the Potomac," now

commanded by Burnside, held the opposite bank. In the middle of December, Burnside, after weeks of inaction, crossed the river at Fredericksburg under the cover of heavy batteries established on the heights of the left bank. But his attack on Lee's fortified lines on the high ground above the town ended in disastrous failure and heavy loss. He recrossed the river, and then, through wintry months of frost, snow, and rain, all was quiet along the Rappahannock. It was not till the end of April 1862 that General Halleck, who was directing from Washington the operations of the war on the Federal side, decided that the armies massed along the river should once more cross it to overwhelm Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia, and open the way to Richmond.

At the end of April the forces under Lee's command amounted to about 62,000 men and 170 guns. The Army of the Potomac, now under the command of General Hooker, had been raised to 130,000 men, with 428 guns. Thus in the coming struggle on the Rappahannock the Confederates would be outnumbered in the proportion of more than two to one. It was a position that might well have seemed desperate to a less able leader than Lee.

His army was organized in two corps of unequal strength—the 1st Corps, about 18,000 strong, under Longstreet; the 2nd, about 38,000 strong, under Jackson. These troops were watching the line of the river above and below Fredericksburg, and holding the entrenched lines from which they had hurled

back Burnside's onset in December. Stuart had been sent off with 1,500 horsemen across the Rapidan to Culpeper Station, on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad, to keep watch on a concentration of Northern cavalry, reported by spies to be at Warrenton Junction, on the other side of the upper Rappahannock.

Burnside's defeat at Fredericksburg had convinced Halleck and Hooker that Lee's lines could not be forced by a direct attack across the lower Rappahannock. The question was, as the American attaché said to Buller at Colenso, "how to find a way round." Hooker felt himself strong enough to divide his forces, in order to make a flank march, turn the Confederate entrenchments, and make Lee come out of them and fight in the open. So far, in these earlier battles of the war, the side that fought a defensive battle had usually won it, and Hooker meant to force Lee to attack him, recombine his own divided army on the actual battlefield, and catch Lee between hammer and anvil. If Lee escaped, it would only be by retiring towards Richmond with forces twice his own at his heels.

Hooker's plan was to leave his lieutenant, General Sedgwick, with 58,000 men on the lower river facing Fredericksburg. Sedgwick was to rivet Lee's attention on himself by a false attack at the crossing below the town, to be turned into a real attack as soon as the Confederates were forced by Hooker's further operations to relax their hold on Fredericksburg. Hooker himself, with some 60,000 men, would move

up the left bank of the river, cross at Kelly's Ford, and by a forced march reach the Rapidan at Germanna Ford, and thence push on towards Chancellorsville; while Stoneman, with 10,000 horsemen, would make a dash from Warrenton Junction, cross the Rappahannock and Rapidan (the latter river at Racoon Ford), and, raiding to the southwards, destroy railways, telegraphs, and bridges, and cut off Lee's supplies. Hooker believed he was strong enough to fight Lee if the Confederate general turned upon him; but he seems to have expected that when his opponent found that 60,000 men were in rear of the Fredericksburg lines, and nearly as many more crossing the river below the town, while 10,000 cavalry were raiding his communications, he would make a prompt retreat towards Richmond.

The movement had been planned for the middle of April, but heavy rains, that made the roads difficult and swelled the rivers, delayed it till the end of the month. On April 28th Stoneman moved from Warrenton Junction with the Federal cavalry, slipped past Stuart's position at Culpeper, and then pushed on across the Rapidan at Racoon Ford, and riding due south, began the work of destroying bridges and railways in the direction of Richmond. Stuart, with his much smaller force, might have been sent off in pursuit; but there was other work for him to do, in view of which Lee disregarded Stoneman's cavalry raid for the moment. For Stuart had discovered that a large force of all arms was moving up the left bank of the Rappahannock to-

wards Kelly's Ford, and reported this to Lee's headquarters at Fredericksburg on the evening of the 28th.

Early on the morning of the 29th Fredericksburg woke to the sound of firing along the river below the town, and Jackson, who was watching this part of the line, reported that, under cover of a heavy fog, the enemy had thrown pontoon bridges over the Rappahannock, and had sent troops across which were engaged with his outposts. Neither Lee nor Jackson was anxious about this attack. They were quite confident that they could repel an assault on the Fredericksburg lines as easily as they had done in December. The question was what the flank movement on the upper river meant. Lee relied on Stuart to clear this point up.

Hooker had made a mistake in sending away all Stoneman's mounted division on a distant raid and retaining only a handful of cavalry. Stuart was able to keep in close touch with his movements. On the evening of the 29th Lee had news from his cavalry that all the afternoon strong columns of the enemy had been passing the Rapidan by the Germanna and Ely's Fords. He at once marched off Anderson's Division towards Chancellorsville. Early next day Stuart sent in word that he had taken prisoners belonging to three Federal army corps—the 5th, 11th, and 12th. Anderson reported that he had not been able to reach Chancellorsville, but had fallen back before a strong hostile advanced guard and taken up a position where he was entrenching his force.

So far Hooker's plan had worked out well. Sedgwick had bridged the river below Fredericksburg, and was entrenched on the right bank and ready to attack. Hooker himself, by a forced march, had crossed the Rappahannock and the Rapidan, and concentrated 60,000 men in the rear of the Confederate position.

The country south of the Rapidan, where he was now operating, was the thickly-wooded region which, in a later campaign, became famous under the name of the "Wilderness." The surface was undulating, and for the most part covered with a forest of fir, cedar, and oak, with quantities of close-growing underwood, often so entangled with creepers that it was difficult even for a man on foot to make his way through it. The streams, though small, flowed in marshy hollows that made them serious obstacles. There were clearings round the scattered wood-built houses, and several roads, mostly "planked" or "corduroyed" with felled timber, ran through the woods. Some of these were highways traversing the forest from end to end, others were cross-roads leading to the local iron-mines and furnaces, which the war had put out of work. Towards the western edge of the Wilderness Forest, near a junction of several roads and woodland tracks, stood a large country house belonging to the Chancellor family, and known as "Chancellorsville." Here Hooker established his headquarters on April 30th. There was an extensive clearing immediately to the west of it, and the hollows of streams, running north to

the Rapidan and south-west to the Rappahannock, marked out a line that could be quickly strengthened with breastworks of felled timber and hasty entrenchments. From Chancellorsville he issued a somewhat boastful general order to his army congratulating them on an assured success. It ran thus :—

"It is with heartfelt satisfaction that the commanding general announces to his army that the operations of the last three days have determined that our enemy must either ingloriously fly or come out from behind his entrenchments and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him. The operations of the 5th, 11th, and 12th Corps have been a succession of splendid achievements."

Hooker was making a very premature announcement of success. In the light of his subsequent proceedings it would appear that he counted upon Lee retreating from a dangerous position without any serious fighting. But he knew his opponent well enough to anticipate that if he did not at once retire he would certainly not wait to be surrounded in the lines of Fredericksburg, but would come out and attack him. In that case he reckoned upon being able to inflict defeat upon Lee by merely holding the position he had taken up in the woods about Chancellorsville. But in assuming this passive attitude he would be throwing away the chief advantage he had gained by the forced march. In the woods his great superiority in artillery was neutralized, for there were not many positions where even a single battery could find a field of fire of more than a few hundred yards. The movements of his infantry were restricted by

being for the most part confined to the tracks cut through the forest. There were only four openings of any importance leading out of it towards Fredericksburg—namely, the old turnpike road in the centre, the so-called "River Road" north of it, the corduroyed track known as the "Plank Road" to the south of it, and still farther to his right the clearings, through which ran an unfinished railway line. These four ways were so many defiles, the western outlets from which Lee could block with a locally superior force, bringing the heads of the Federal columns under a concentrated and converging fire of rifles and artillery as they issued from the forest.

For a short time on the morning of May 1st Hooker seemed to have decided on a more resolute policy—the policy of attack, the only one by which he could reap decisive results from his earlier operations. His best chance was now to take the initiative, not to wait till Lee chose between retreating and attacking the lines of Chancellorsville, but to move boldly forward and bring all his forces to bear on the enemy, falling on the rear of the Fredericksburg works with his right, while Sedgwick attacked with the left. In order to secure joint action with Sedgwick, he had established a chain of signal stations from Chancellorsville to the United States Ford across the Rappahannock on his left. Here his engineers had built a pontoon bridge for reinforcements to join him, and had run a field telegraph line from the ford back by Falmouth to the heights opposite Fredericks-

burg. But the line of telegraph worked badly, and in the early hours of the May day the hot summer haze from the river and the swampy hollows made the signal stations nearly useless.

Nevertheless, if he had pushed steadily forward the sound of his guns would soon have been sufficient warning to Sedgwick to co-operate. Early in the day strong columns were moving by the forest roads westward from the Chancellorsville lines. Fredericksburg was only twelve miles away, and Hooker spoke of being in possession of the place by noon, or soon after. But his energetic mood did not last long. He had expected to find in front of him, on leaving the woods, only Anderson's Division, and to drive it with very little effort from the ground where it had halted the day before. But while he was still in the forest, the heads of his columns met with such serious and determined opposition that it became evident that instead of retiring, or waiting to be crushed between superior forces, Lee had come out of his lines to attack him.

When Sedgwick crossed the river and entrenched himself on the right bank below Fredericksburg, and Stuart's dispatches told of a strong flank movement across the upper Rappahannock and the Rapidan, Lee had at once decided to fall upon one or other of the divided wings of the Federal army before they could combine to attack him. A suggestion that Sedgwick should be driven back across the river was dismissed. To close with him meant to bring the assaulting columns under the

fire of the heavy batteries established on the commanding heights of the left bank. It was better to wait and let him run his head against the Fredericksburg entrenchments. But Sedgwick was also playing a waiting game. He skirmished with the Confederate outposts, and his guns threw a few shells among them, but most of his men were busy digging entrenchments to secure his hold of the ground on which he lay. On the other bank of the river three captive balloons swayed at the ends of their long cables. From these a watchful eye was being kept on the Confederate lines to give warning of any movement against Hooker, and to catch the first signs of his advance from the westward.

When Stuart's later messages showed that the enemy was in force in the Wilderness Woods, Anderson's Division was sent out to gain touch with Hooker. Then on the evening of April 30th Lee resolved on a bold stroke. He would leave only 10,000 men in the Fredericksburg lines. They might bluff Sedgwick into waiting still longer; but even if the Federals attacked, the lines were strong enough to be held for a while. All Lee wanted was time to strike a crushing blow at Hooker in the woods. He would march against him with the whole of Jackson's Corps and every man he could spare from the 1st Corps. Even so he would not bring an equal force against the Federals, but it would be nearly equal, and he relied on the fighting quality of his men and the leadership of Jackson to make up the difference.

The march began in the night between April 30th and May 1st. The darkness and then the mists of the early hours of daylight hid the first movements from the observers in the cars of the Federal balloons. Further to impose upon Sedgwick, deserters had been sent out, who made their way into his picket lines in the early morning, and told that Lee had been heavily reinforced from Richmond. The garrison of the lines made such a good show, and kept up such a brisk skirmishing with the Federal pickets, that Sedgwick believed Fredericksburg was strongly held even when the mist cleared and his balloonists reported long columns moving westward by the roads towards the forest.

Before dawn Anderson's entrenched line was reinforced from Fredericksburg. But Lee had no intention of standing on the defensive. The Federal advance had been very slow. Hooker was waiting for reinforcements he had called up from Falmouth. The heads of his columns were still in the forest, when on every road they came upon advancing enemies. They pushed back the first detachments they encountered. They had expected to have to deal with at most a weak rearguard. But now across every road and in every clearing they came upon ordered lines of the men in gray. Batteries opened upon them at the short ranges imposed by the close country. A column pushing forward on the turnpike was held in front and suddenly assailed on its right flank by swarms of gray-clad skirmishers breaking through the woods and coming up from

the direction of the Plank Road. It fell back before this double attack.

Forest fighting is a trying business to all but the most resolute of men. To press forward or even to stand fast while one faces hard fighting in front and hears the roar of unseen guns and the crackle of rifle fire coming from right and left, with only the vaguest sense of its actual direction, and a harassing suspicion that it may be already far in on flank and rear, makes even brave men think seriously about the safety of the line of retreat. The Confederates, fighting nearer the edge of the forest, with their supports well in hand in the clearings immediately behind them, knew how they stood, and were able to work together. Hooker's men were in the thick of a "fog of war," made more trying by their surroundings. Just as the defenders of the turnpike had been driven in by a flank attack from the Plank Road, so a stand on the Plank Road was broken by a flank attack coming through the tangle of wood in the direction of the railway.

In the presence of this unexpected opposition Hooker decided to abandon his attempted advance, and bethought him of his promise that if the enemy did not take to "inglorious flight" he would be forced "to give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaited him." That chosen ground was the line of entrenchments farther back in the woods along the Chancellorsville ridges. He sent orders for a general retirement to the prepared position. Remembering how the wild onset

of the Federals had been flung back from the lines of Fredericksburg, he counted on inflicting the same fate on the Confederates at the lines of Chancellorsville.

Following up the retreating enemy, Lee and Jackson's men came on entrenchments and breastworks bristling with. artillery, and closing every road and sweeping every clearing. There was a lull in the fighting. Along the front there was a desultory exchange of rifle fire. Here and there a battery found a target and sent its shells screaming and crashing through the woodlands. Lee and his staff reconnoitred the Federal lines. They found the right and centre so formidable that an assault could only end in useless loss of life. Where the line turned to the eastward the bare plateau of Hazel Grove rose out of the woods crowned with batteries. Beyond the works were not so strong. Stuart was sent off to reconnoitre this part of the line more closely.

Both sides had learned the value of entrenchments. All along the opposing fronts the men in blue and the men in gray were working hard. The Federals were strengthening their lines. The Confederates were felling trees, making entanglements of branches, piling stones, grubbing up earth to improvise defensive cover. So the day wore on with an occasional spatter of fire, and at times a sudden alarm when the firing would swell for a while into a roar of musketry and cannon. A message sent to Sedgwick by Hooker, bidding him attack Fredericksburg, arrived too late for any action till the morrow. As the sun went down

the firing ceased. Camp fires glowed in every clearing of the forest, and the two armies slept in their woodland bivouacs.

There was little rest for the two great chiefs of the Confederate army. Lee and Jackson had already agreed that an attempt must be made against the extreme right of the enemy's works. They had a very imperfect map of the Wilderness region; but Stuart was out with Fitzhugh Lee, the general's son, and would bring in information before dawn that would decide the actual plan for the morrow's battle. Lee and Jackson had snatched a brief sleep rolled in their cloaks under a clump of pine and oak in the woods to the west of Chancellorsville. Before three o'clock they were up, and by the light of a lantern sat on a couple of biscuit boxes breakfasting, discussing the orders for the day. At three Stuart rode up, dismounted, flung his bridle to an orderly, and joined them. He put another box between them, spread his map upon it, and pencil in hand made his report.

Along the Federal right all the entrenchments looked southwards. They ended abruptly at a point on the turnpike two and a half miles short of Wilderness Run. In military phrase, the extreme right was "in the air." It rested on no obstacle. It was not protected by redoubts or by turning back to the northward. Further, Stuart had found a friend and helper in a Mr. Welford, who owned an iron mine near the enemy's right, and had lately cut through the woods a road, marked as yet on no

map, which gave a concealed access to the ground between the Federal flank and the hollow of Wilderness Run. The road had been made for hauling ore to a furnace near Welford's house, and the ironmaster had volunteered to act as a guide to troops sent by this way.

The plan of battle was soon settled. Jackson had often before acted as the leader of a striking force detached by Lee. It was to be his work in this, his last, battle. Lee would retain only some 10,000 men under his immediate command. They would during long hours of the coming day keep up a pretence of attacking the enemy's works. The forest and their own activity would mask their weakness. Stuart would send patrols to watch the woods facing the enemy's works on the right. Jackson would mass 45,000 men in a single column, and, guided by Welford, work round the enemy's right, mass his army near the fork of the roads to the west of their extreme flank, and then come sweeping into the forest, rolling up their line, attacking behind their entrenchments, driving everything before him with local weight of numbers, aided by surprise, and cutting them off from the fords of the Rapidan. The plan offered a prospect not merely of defeating but of destroying Hooker's army. It would not matter now if Sedgwick rushed Fredericksburg. After destroying Hooker the victorious Confederates would turn on him and crush him also.

"How soon will you move?" asked Lee.

"At once," replied Jackson, his stern features aglow with the enthusiasm of expected triumph. The men were quietly roused from their bivouacs, and fell in silently after taking a hasty meal from their haversacks. Staff officers passed from point to point directing regiments and brigades how to reach their places in the column. Twilight was beginning, but it was dark among the forest trees, and it says much for the war-trained discipline of the Army of Northern Virginia that the long column formed without confusion or delay. At four o'clock the leading division marched off, with a squadron of Stuart's horsemen at its head. Lee sat on horseback in one of the forest glades watching the long line tramping past him. Jackson was beside him for a while; then with a few parting words and a grasp of the hand he bade Lee good-bye, and gradually gained the head of the column.

The twilight grew to day, and the sun rose over the woodlands in a clear blue sky. Still Lee watched the endless march. It was four hours before the last of Jackson's men had gone by, for the column was nearly ten miles from front to rear—sun-tanned, weather-beaten infantry men in ragged gray uniforms, with blankets strapped bandolier fashion across their shoulders, and broken boots or strips of hide twisted round their bare feet; guns that had lost all parade polish tugged over the rough forest road by thin horses all bone and muscle—a working army marching silently to victory saluting their chief with a glance and a smile instead of the rolling cheers and

the exultant yell that generally greeted him. When the sun rose there came sounds of battle from the woods to the north-eastward, deep booming of cannon, dull patter of distant rifle fire, for already the feigned attack had begun that was to rivet Hooker's attention on the wrong point. When the last of Jackson's men had gone by Lee turned and rode towards the firing.

He was taking very serious risks, but he had recognized and accepted them. The best part of his army had been sent off on a march of many hours by a narrow track in the western woods, and he had with him only Anderson and M'Law's Divisions of Longstreet's Corps, not quite 10,000 men, to hold the enemy along a front of more than four miles. If Hooker were to assume the offensive, the situation would be serious; but Lee knew his adversary, and felt quite sure that a persistent show of attacking him would be enough to keep him within his entrenched lines through the long summer day. Guns were crowded up to the front, trees being felled by the score to make way for them, and a heavy cannonade thundered against the Chancellorsville lines, along the River Road by the Rappahannock on the right and in the clearings of the Turnpike and Plank Roads in the centre. Lines of skirmishers were pushed well forward, covered by improvised breastworks, the firing line being made strong to give the impression that supports were massing behind it for an assault. But there were no supports available. It was a splendid game of "bluff," and the forest

effectually screened the real weakness of the Confederate attack. Hooker's men stood to their breastworks, and manned their rifle-pits and trenches, and answered back the hostile fire with cannon and rifle.

As the morning hours went by and no assault was made, the Federal commander began to suspect that all this "sound and fury" was meant to veil the preparations for a retirement. He was confirmed in this idea when, from the high ground of Hazel Grove, General Sickles, who commanded there, reported that, looking down the long hollow which runs southwards from the height, he could see, through gaps in the trees, men, guns, and wagons marching away in a steady stream with their backs to him. What Sickles saw was the rear divisions of Jackson's Corps marching across Lewis Creek, near Welford's house, and moving south-west by the new roadway. It looked like a retirement, for he had no means of knowing that, three miles farther on, the long column was turning sharply to the northward. Stuart's men in the woods had driven back patrols pushed out from the Federal right, and further screened Jackson's movement by holding every path and clearing in front of the enemy's works on this side.

Hooker felt so sure that the Confederate retreat had begun that he agreed to a proposal of Sickles that he should advance from the lines at Hazel Grove, attack along Lewis Creek, and "capture guns and baggage." Sickles came on, covered by a heavy fire of artillery, and gradually pushed some thousands

into action. But their advance was delayed by a strong rearguard that Jackson had left facing Hazel Grove. Having taken this precaution, he had pushed on, regardless of the firing in the woods behind him. He took the chance of Sickles breaking through, and held on to his original purpose. Whatever happened in the woods round Lewis Creek, a successful stroke against the Federal flank would be decisive.

The march of Jackson's column on the rough and narrow forest track was terribly slow. It was late in the afternoon when the leading brigade—General Rodes's Alabama regiments—reached the open ground near Old Wilderness Tavern. Then for fully two hours, as mile on mile of marching men came into position, Jackson was forming his divisions for battle in three lines. The entrenchments on the extreme right of the Federals were held by the 11th Corps, under General Howard. Most of his regiments were recruited from the German population of the Northern States. The roll of his brigade and regimental commanders reads like an extract from a Prussian army list. Many of them had served in the forces of various German states. Some had seen war service in 1848 and 1849. Howard himself was a good soldier. He recognized that, though his line was strong against a frontal attack, his flank was dangerously exposed. Hooker seems to have sent him a warning message, suggesting that an attempt might be made against it, and Howard himself states in his narrative of the day's work that he was anxious on the subject.

Hooker had sent away nearly all his mounted troops on Stoneman's raid, and had a mere handful of cavalry with him under Pleasanton. These were acting with Sickles near Hazel Grove. The firing in that direction was drifting southwards through the woods, and this somewhat reassured Howard. But he was troubled by the fact that Stuart's gray-coated horsemen appeared from time to time in the clearing in his front, pushed close up to the works, and retired when fired upon, only to reappear again soon after. The marvel is that he took no steps to secure his flank. How little even a veteran general of the day sometimes knew of the mere elements of war is shown by the fact that it did not occur either to him or to any of his American or German officers that it would be useful to have a line of patrols in the woods on his flank to watch the ground between his extreme right and Wilderness Run. A single patrol of scouts properly worked would have told him that an army was forming up for attack on his flank, and was within a couple of miles of it.

Jackson had himself gone forward, under cover of the woods, and seen with his own eyes the state of affairs in Howard's lines, and he felt so secure that he took all the time needed to form his triple line of battle, and did not give the word to advance till he had more than 30,000 bayonets in array. He took his post beside Rodes in the front of the Alabama Brigade. It was within a few minutes of six o'clock when, glancing along the ordered lines, he turned to the brigadier and asked, "Are you ready,

General Rodes?" "Yes, sir." "You can go forward, sir." A nod from Rodes to his bugler, and the call for the advance was sounded, and the gray lines began to tramp forward into the forest, the red rays of the declining sun in their faces.

Along the front of Hooker's lines the firing had died down to a mere desultory exchange of shots, except south of Hazel Grove, where there was still some serious fighting in the woods. Behind their entrenchments the Federals were cooking their evening meal. Arms were piled in long rows, and the officers of several regiments were actually dining, seated at improvised tables of packing-cases. The first sign that something was happening in the woods on the right was a rush of startled birds and beasts. There was a flutter of wings among the trees; scared deer and hares and rabbits dashed into the bivouacs. Before Howard's men had realized what it meant, there were a crackling of branches in the underwood, the tramp of thousands, the click of accoutrements, the murmur of a great movement of men, and along the opening of the road, out of clearings, through thickets the gray regiments appeared; and as they sighted the blue-clad Federals rushing to their arms, there came from the long front of the attack a blast of rifle fire, and then by the road a battery unlimbered and sent its shells tearing through the woodland.

The surprise was complete. Men were shot as they rose from the ground and ran to their arms; horses fell struggling at their picket lines; officers

were calling to their men to form, and while some tried to obey, others in the confused panic of the moment turned and fled from the advancing wave of fire and steel. General Deven's Brigade, on the extreme right, was overwhelmed, and hurled back in a mingled mass of men, horses, guns, and wagons, leaving hundreds of prisoners and two cannon in the hands of the Confederates.

Howard had been inspecting the left of his line, and had dismounted at his headquarters, Dowdall's Tavern, a farmhouse near the turnpike, about 800 yards east of the Wilderness Church, and close to a line of trenches and breastworks that ran northwards from the main line to bar the road. Suddenly a sound of heavy firing came from the extreme right, and he mounted and galloped along the road in that direction. The first thing that told him there had been a disaster was the sight of fugitives crowding into the opening along the road—"not the few stragglers that always fly like chaff at the first breeze, but scores of them, some with arms, some without." The scores soon became a moving crowd, throwing into confusion M'Lean's Brigade as it tried to swing round to meet the attack. Guns galloping to the front were stopped by the throng. Howard sent swift orders to Steinwehr and Schurz's Brigades to form front to the westward, and riding into the panic-stricken mass saw the enemy's advance coming on through a clearing of the woods. "As they emerged from the forest," he says, "the men in front would halt and fire, and while these were reloading another

set would run before them, halt and fire in no regular line, but in such multitudes that our men went down before them like trees before a hurricane."

A regiment of Federal cavalry—the 8th Pennsylvania—came riding up, and charged the Confederates; but disordered in the underwood, and fired upon from rifles crowded among the trees, the horsemen were driven back with loss and scattered, to rally again far to the rear. One of the troopers, whose horse was shot, and who narrowly escaped capture, gives a vivid glimpse of the scene he saw when he struggled back to the road :—

"The road and the woods that bordered it presented a scene of terror and confusion such as I had never seen before. Men and animals were dashing against one another in wild dismay before the line of fire that came crashing and crackling after them. The constantly approaching rattle of musketry, the crash of the shells through the trees, seemed to come from three sides upon the broken fragments of the 11th Corps that crowded each other on the road. The horses of the men of my regiment who had been shot, mingled with the pack-mules that carried the ammunition of the 11th Corps, tore like wild beasts through the woods. I tried in vain to catch one.....I now gave up the hope of a mount, and seeing the Confederate lines coming near me, tried to save myself on foot. More than half of the runaways had thrown their arms away, and all of them were talking a language I did not understand. I doubt if any of us knew where we were going, further than that we were fleeing before the pursuing lines of the enemy."

Presently the dismounted trooper came upon the corps commander, who was trying to rally the fugitives under fire.

"In the very height of the flight we came upon General Howard,

who seemed to be the only man in his own command who was not running at that moment. He was in the middle of the road and mounted, his maimed arm embracing a stand of colours that some regiment had deserted, while with his sound arm he was gesticulating to the men to stand by their flag. With bared head he was pleading with his soldiers, literally weeping as he entreated the unheeding horde. Maimed in his person, and sublime in his patriotism, he seemed worthy to stand by, and out of pure compliment to his appearance I hooked up my sabre and fell into the little line that gathered about him. As the front became clear we fired a few shots at the advance line of the Confederates; but a fresh mass of fugitives in blue soon filled the road, and we had to stop firing. The general now ordered us to cover the whole line of retreat so as to let none pass, and the officers, inspired by his devotion, ran in front of their men, drew their swords, and attempted to stop them. As the number constantly increased the pressure became greater upon the line that blocked the way; but this line was constantly reinforced by officers and others, and offered some resistance to the pressure. At last the surging, seething sea of humanity broke over the feeble barrier, and General Howard and his officers were carried away by main force with the tide." *

There were a rally and a brief stand at the line of entrenchments across the road; but the Confederates, flushed with their first success, came pouring in a fierce wave of bayonets over the works, and again carried all before them. The onset was not checked till the advance broke into a wide clearing north-east of Hazel Grove. Pleasanton and Sickles had moved back towards the high ground when they heard the storm of fire behind them. Pleasanton had hurriedly got some fifty guns into line across the road to sweep the clearings. As the advancing rush of the attack came in sight the guns opened fire at a hundred yards, tearing ghastly lanes of dead and crippled

* "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. iii. p. 184.

men in the dense mass and effectually checking the advance. The Confederates fell back into the forest, and kept up a dropping fire of rifles from the edge of the bush. The Federal artillery ceased firing, and masses of infantry began to form up behind it.

It was now quite dark, except where the rising moon gave a doubtful light in the clearings of the wood. The Confederates were disorganized by their own swift success. Regiments, brigades, and divisions were mingled together. Officers were separated from their men, and many had lost all sense of direction in the gathering darkness, the broken ground, and the tangled thickets, where gray uniforms had been torn to rags as the men burst through the underwood. The wide track of the advance was strewn with dead and wounded. Men had stopped to help the latter, or to secure and guard prisoners, or catch runaway horses, and take possession of wagons and guns. In open country and in broad daylight the re-forming after the first burst of a successful attack is no easy matter, and is a good test of discipline and training. It was a serious problem in the darkness of the woods.

Jackson had ridden forward with the attack. He had destroyed a whole Federal corps and completely turned the enemy's works, but he was anxious to do still more before they could recover from the first shock. While exerting himself, with the help of his staff, to get the leading divisions of his own army into order and formation, he sent off a messenger to A. P. Hill, who commanded the third line, and

had followed up the advance without being closely engaged. Hill was ordered to cut the enemy's line of retreat by seizing the road to United States Ford. He came up to Jackson and told him he did not understand the lie of the country on that side, and a staff officer was told off to direct him.

Jackson was now somewhat in front of the men, who were re-forming in the woods, and was on the main road near where a side track through the forest ran into it. A Confederate battery had just opened fire without orders. Some of the enemy's guns had replied at close range, and in the excitement of the moment a number of the troops, who were re-forming, were seized with a panic as the shells burst among them. Jackson himself rode back and rallied them. He then turned and went to the front again, anxious to see for himself how far the enemy was prepared to make a stand. His staff officers formed rather a numerous group of horsemen. One of them remonstrated with him for being so far to the front, and suggested that he was needlessly exposing himself. "There is no danger," he replied; "the enemy is routed."

But there was a terrible danger on which he had not counted. To use a familiar phrase, men's nerves were "jumpy" after the wild excitement of the last hour, and under the influence of the darkness and mystery of the forest, in which friend and foe were huddled together so near each other. Jackson turned to ride back to his men. Then came the disastrous chance that marred the well-won victory.

At the point where he approached the Confederate ranks a Carolina brigade had just formed. They half saw in the obscurity a body of horsemen riding towards them, and took them for a party of hostile cavalry. Two volleys were fired without a word of challenge. The first killed an officer and a signal sergeant of Jackson's staff; the second severely wounded the general himself. A bullet lodged in his right hand, another in his left wrist, a third shattered his left arm. His horse turned and bolted towards the Federal lines, the wounded man still keeping his seat. A branch struck him in the face, knocked off his cap, and nearly dismounted him; but grasping the bridle with the wounded right hand he regained control, rode back to his staff, and then fell into the arms of the officer who helped him to dismount.

Weak from shock and loss of blood, and suffering severe pain, he was still self-possessed and full of mental energy and determination. He insisted that the fact that he had been wounded should be concealed from the men, and repeated to Hill his order to bring his division up to the front. His officers realized that he had been very badly hurt, and that his position in front of the line was dangerous in the extreme. The two volleys had been taken by the Federals as a prelude of a renewed attack, and they were firing at random through the woods. Here and there the Confederates were replying, and one of the staff came up with a report that hostile guns were unlimbering in the bush just in front. A doctor

had been sent for, but before he arrived the general's wounds were hastily bandaged, and leaning on two of his officers he began to walk slowly towards his own lines. They had hardly started when some guns opened from the underwood on the Federal side, and a shower of grape-shot swept the road. The general was placed on the ground, and the officers lay down beside him to shelter him with their bodies. After a few terrible moments the guns happily changed the direction of their fire, a doctor arrived with a stretcher, and the wounded man was carried to the rear. The first stage of the mournful march was trying. Bullets were whistling through the wood, and one of the bearers fell wounded. The stretcher fell with him, and the general rolled on the ground, and for the first time a groan told of the pain he was enduring.

It was near nine o'clock when Jackson was wounded and carried to the rear. Hill took command, and gradually restored order along the front. But with the loss of the one man who had been the driving force of the whole attack a change had come over the battle. The Confederates were now thinking only of holding the ground they had won till daylight would show the way for a further advance. Sickles's Corps had come up from Hazel Grove and fronted them closely in the woods, so closely that Hill's men could hear the orders being passed to form for a bayonet attack. They were ready for it when it came. After desperate fighting in the moonlit woods Sickles's charge was everywhere driven back.

Hill was wounded, and Stuart took over the command.

When Jackson fell his cavalry leader was arranging a dash to the fords of the Rapidan. He was called back to the flank fight by a messenger from Hill, who told him the general was badly wounded, and the whole situation in the woods was an anxious one on account of the disorder and exhaustion of the troops and the renewed activity of the enemy. The whole position affords a striking example of what is continually occurring in war. Both sides were under a severe strain; the prolonged effort was telling heavily on every one, from generals at the head of brigades and divisions down to regimental and company officers and soldiers in the ranks. The tension was increased by the uncertainties arising from the difficulty of knowing what was passing beyond each one's extremely limited scope of observation. The Federals were rallying after a crushing blow; even among the victors the nerve strain had resulted in local panics.

At such a time the question is which side can make one more effort, and it is in producing this final effort that the influence of an energetic, determined leader is of such overwhelming importance. It was thus that the fall of Jackson had for a while tended to paralyze the fighting force of the Confederates. But there were two elements in the situation that tended to sway the balance in their favour. The success of their great stroke had given them a sense of exultant confidence in themselves; and then, though

there was a pause in the onward tide of victory, they still felt they were the attacking force, theirs was the forward impulse that gave a direction to each one's efforts, while their opponents, still staggering under the first crushing blow, were bracing themselves to meet the next without being clear as to where it might fall.

When Stuart took over the command in the woods, he felt so anxious as to the immediate outlook that he sent back one of his aides, Major Pendleton, to consult his wounded general. When Pendleton reached the field hospital, about 2 a.m. the surgeons at first refused to let him see the general. They had amputated Jackson's left arm, and he was very weak; but when, after some hesitation, Pendleton was admitted to his bedside, the general expressed pleasure at seeing him. "I thought you had been killed," he said, and then he asked some questions as to the position in the woods. For a short time he seemed quite alert. Then after some silent thought he told Pendleton he could not work things out; Stuart must do the best he could.

Stuart, full of the restless energy of youth, passed a sleepless night reorganizing his forces and preparing to advance at dawn. With the true cavalry spirit, though he was now commanding an army of gunners and infantry, he meant to go forward at all hazards. Divided from Lee by Hooker's main position, he had not yet been able to communicate with his commander-in-chief, but he relied implicitly on his support. Lee knew that the attack on the right had

been victorious, and not having yet heard of Jackson's fall, counted on his following up his success. Thus on the Confederate side there was the directing impulse of confident leadership.

The Federals, on the other hand, were under the sway of hesitating counsels. The turning of his entrenchments and the destruction of his right, at a moment when he believed he had won the game and had only to follow up a retreating army, had been a staggering blow to Hooker. He had drawn considerable reinforcements from Sedgwick's army by way of Falmouth, and the troops now under his immediate command outnumbered the forces of Lee and Stuart united, and occupied a central position, from which he might throw an overwhelming weight upon either of them. But while attack would have still given him the fairest chance of victory, he was so dominated by the hopeless sense of failure that he thought only of defence, and even now, when he should have united his efforts against a divided enemy, he further divided his own forces. Fearing to be cut off from the fords, he had decided to fight only a rearguard action about Chancellorsville, and fall back on the Rapidan and entrench a new position with its flanks resting on the river.

Napoleon never said a truer thing than that in war the moral is to the material as three to one, and never made a greater mistake than when he said that "Providence is always on the side of the big battalions." The man often counts for more than men,

the leader for more than tens of thousands of followers.

So it was in the last phase of the Chancellorsville campaign. When at dawn on Sunday, May 3rd, Stuart's cannon thundered through the Wilderness woods, and were echoed by Lee's guns opening against the west front of the Chancellorsville lines, Hooker had lost heart, and, notwithstanding superior numbers, tacitly accepted a position of inferiority. The attack had hardly developed when Stuart saw that the commanding ground of Hazel Grove had been abandoned by the enemy, and promptly seized it, and thence enfiladed the Federal line with the fire of thirty guns. Then, not without meeting with dogged resistance, and suffering more than one local repulse, Stuart's men stormed the hastily improvised line of defence held by the Federals.

On the other side of the position the concentrated fire of Lee's artillery had been turned on Chancellorsville and the plantations around the great house. Hooker had a narrow escape. A pillar of the portico was shattered by a bursting shell, and he was stunned by the falling fragments. The house and the woods near it were set on fire, and when the Federal line gave way, and Lee rode into the heart of the conquered position amid the wild cheering of his men, he dismounted and took a personal part in rescuing the enemy's wounded from the burning buildings. It was in this moment of triumph that he heard for the first time that his best general was lying danger-

ously wounded at the other end of the conquered lines.

Only about half of Hooker's force had fought; the rest were already at work entrenching a new position along the Rapidan, where by evening the whole of the Federal right was concentrated. But meanwhile Sedgwick had stormed the heights above Fredericksburg, driving back Early's Division towards Chancellorsville. Early retired fighting, and Sedgwick as he followed him waited in vain for any sign of the expected co-operation of Hooker. Finding himself isolated in the presence of an enemy who though beaten still showed a determined front, and obviously had strong support behind him, Sedgwick marched to Banks Ford, where he entrenched himself on the south side of the Rappahannock.

Next day Lee was upon him. Leaving a mere skeleton force to observe Hooker's new lines, he flung almost his entire force against Sedgwick, stormed his works, drove him across the river, and then returned to confront Hooker once more. Strange to say, the Federal general had remained idle in his lines while a few miles away his lieutenant at Banks Ford was being defeated in a battle of which he could plainly hear the cannonade.

Lee was preparing to attack the lines on the Rapidan, when the weather broke, and a deluge of almost tropical rain descended on the woods of the Wilderness, making the roads difficult and all movement off them impossible. Hooker took advantage of the truce imposed by the storm to evacu-

ate his lines and transfer his army to the north bank. Thence the Federals marched back to their old camps on the heights opposite Fredericksburg, and Lee concentrated his army in its former positions along the river above and below the town.

In the six days' fighting both sides had lost heavily. The Federals' losses were about 14,000 killed and wounded, and some 6,000 more prisoners or missing. The Confederates captured 13 guns and many colours. They lost about 10,000 killed and wounded and some 2,000 prisoners, mostly taken by Sedgwick in his attack on the Fredericksburg lines. These losses were more than made good by drafts of recruits from Richmond. But Lee had suffered another loss that nothing could replace: Jackson, who had so long been his "right hand," died on May 10th.

He had rallied at first, and there were hopes that his life would be saved. He heard the news of Lee's victorious operations, and discussed with his friends the conduct of the campaign. Asked what he thought of Hooker's plan, he said: "It was in the main a good conception, an excellent plan, but he should not have sent away his cavalry. That was his great blunder. It was that which enabled me to turn him and to take him in the rear. Had he kept his cavalry with him his plan would have been a very good one." Speaking of his own part in the battle, he said that if he had not been wounded he would have cut off Hooker from the Rapidan, and taken up a position where the Federals must have

attacked him. "My men sometimes fail to drive the enemy from a position, but they always fail to drive us out." In characteristic words he gave his judgment of his own masterly action: "Our movement was a great success—I think the most successful military movement of my life; but I expect to receive far more credit for it than I deserve. Most men will think I planned it all from the first; but it was not so. I simply took advantage of circumstances as they were presented to me in the providence of God. I feel that His hand led me. Let us give Him the glory."

On May 7th pneumonia set in. Three days later he died. In the last hour he lay unconscious and silent, but suddenly he seemed to rouse himself. He was dreaming of battle, perhaps of the crisis of Chancellorsville. "Order A. P. Hill to prepare for action," he said. "Pass the infantry to the front. Tell Major Hawks—" Then he was silent for a few minutes. When next he spoke it was under the influence of some more peaceful thought. "Let us cross over the river," he said, "and rest under the shade of the trees." A few minutes more and he breathed his last.

Lee knew what he had lost. "Any victory," he wrote, "would be dear at such a price. I know not how to replace him." And after the war he said to an intimate friend, "If I had had Jackson at Gettysburg I should have won the battle, and a complete victory there would have resulted in the establishment of Southern independence."

## CHAPTER IV.

### GETTYSBURG.

*July* 1, 2, *and* 3, 1863.

GETTYSBURG was the decisive battle of the War of Secession, the hard-fought field that shattered the hopes of the Confederacy. The terrible struggle went on for nearly two years more, but never again had Lee the same chance of securing a victory for his cause that could do more than delay its final downfall.

For nearly a month after the battle of Chancellorsville he faced Hooker on the Rappahannock, about Fredericksburg. During this time he reorganized his army of 70,000 men in three corps, under Generals Longstreet, Ewell, and Hill. Stuart commanded the cavalry. Hooker's army, dispirited by its recent failure, shrank to some 80,000 men, large numbers of officers and men whose term of service had expired refusing to renew their engagements. Hooker's mission during this time was merely to watch the Confederate army and hold himself in readiness to act against it if it moved northward to strike at Washington. In Government circles strong feeling against

him had been aroused by his failure in the Chancellorsville campaign, and there was a movement in progress for his removal from the command.

On the Mississippi, Grant was besieging Vicksburg. Its capture would give the Federals control of the whole line of the great river and cut the Confederacy off completely from the Western States. Lee decided to endeavour to relieve the pressure on Vicksburg indirectly by an invasion of the Northern territory. He hoped thus to alarm the Federal Government into withdrawing at least some part of Grant's forces from the Mississippi, and, in any case, counted on making his own capital secure by compelling Hooker's army to follow him northwards. He expected to be able to force the Federals to attack him on a prepared position, and to win a great victory on Northern soil. Such a success would endanger Washington, and would bring a victorious ending of the war in sight. It was well known that more than one foreign power was ready to recognize the Confederacy on the morrow of such a triumph, and in the Northern States there were many advocates of a compromise with the South.

On June 3rd Lee began his movement for the invasion of the Northern States. Hill's Corps was left at Fredericksburg to watch Hooker and, in combination with Stuart's cavalry, to screen the north-westward march of the other two corps as long as possible. Ewell and Longstreet's Corps concentrated at Culpeper Courthouse, beyond the Rapidan; then Ewell pushed on to Winchester,

in the Shenandoah valley. By June 13th the army of Northern Virginia was thus divided into three detachments, covering a front of about 100 miles—Ewell with the left at Winchester, Longstreet with the centre at Culpeper, Hill with the right still at Fredericksburg.

Lee counted on being able to concentrate rapidly when Hooker moved. But it was not till the 9th that the Federal commander learned by chance that considerable hostile forces were north of the Rapidan. He was planning a stroke against one or other of the divided Confederate corps, when the Washington Government became aware of the movements in the Shenandoah valley, and concluded that Lee was marching to cross the Potomac and threaten the capital. On this Lincoln and Halleck peremptorily ordered Hooker to march to its defence.

As soon as Hooker began his movement, Lee withdrew Hill from Fredericksburg; and the three corps marched on the Potomac by the Shenandoah valley, Ewell's Corps leading the way. Lee had successfully stolen a march on Hooker, and the Northern States were open to a Confederate invasion.

At the beginning of the third week of June Hooker's army was moving towards the Potomac. It interposed between the mass of Lee's forces and the capital. The Confederate army was still widely dispersed. Hill was marching up from Fredericksburg. Longstreet was in the Shenandoah valley, holding the passes of the Blue Ridge that forms

its eastern wall, with Stuart's cavalry thrown out in his front towards Hooker's army. Ewell's front and rear were separated by more than 60 miles of country. His rear division was at Winchester; his centre was across the upper Potomac into the Northern States; his leading division, under Rodes, with a detachment of cavalry, nearly 40 miles north at Chambersburg. Lee's object, so far, was to keep the Federals in anxious uncertainty, and so perhaps lead them to abandon their operations in the Mississippi, in order to strengthen their forces in the Atlantic States. Rodes's advance northward was a threat against the great cities of Northern Pennsylvania, where local levies began to muster to defend the crossings of the Susquehanna.

Ewell had cleared the Shenandoah valley of all the Federal garrisons and detachments, losing only 269 men, and capturing 4,000 prisoners, 28 guns, and 300 loaded wagons. In the last week of June Lee pushed forward the whole of Ewell's Corps towards the Susquehanna, while Hill and Longstreet's concentrated about Chambersburg. Hooker had by this time crossed the Potomac above Washington, and was marching northwards in the hope of forcing the Confederates to attack him on a position he would select for defence. Both sides were anxious to begin the decisive battle of the campaign on the defensive, for the memory of Fredericksburg was still fresh in the minds of the leaders. Lee, as the invader, was in a better position for forcing on such a battle; but, partly through his own fault, he was

badly served by his cavalry in operations where early information of the enemy's movements was all-important. So long as Hooker was south of the Potomac, Stuart, with part of the cavalry, had held the passes of the Blue Mountains, screening the Confederate movement through the Shenandoah valley. When the Federals crossed the river, Stuart was directed to push northwards and join Ewell, and his suggestion was accepted that he should do this by a rapid march to the eastward of the Confederate positions. But he found the whole mass of the enemy's army in his way, and had to cross the Potomac a little above Washington and make a long detour through the enemy's country. He was thus separated from Lee at the critical moment. For some reason that is hard to discover, a detachment of Stuart's cavalry left with Lee, under General Imboden, instead of being used to get in touch with the Federal advance, marched on the left, the flank farthest from the enemy. Lee was quite in the dark as to the Federal movements until in the last days of June he obtained from spies information that the Army of the Potomac was in full march northward. He then issued orders for his three corps to concentrate for battle, and chose as the point of concentration the town of Gettysburg, a centre from which a number of turnpike roads radiated, and near which he expected to find a position on which to stop the enemy's advance. Ewell was ordered to move on Gettysburg from the northward, while the other two corps marched on it from the

Cumberland valley, Hill leading, and Longstreet following him up.

As the Army of the Potomac marched northward, Hooker was deprived of the command and Meade put in his place. Meade knew that his advance would force Lee to concentrate, and he was anxious to invite an attack from him. The position he had chosen on which to await the Confederate attack, and bar the roads to Washington and Baltimore, was on the low range of hills that runs along the left bank of Pipe Creek, a day's march south-east of Gettysburg. But reports that the Confederates were still widely dispersed induced him to push forward towards the great junction of roads at Gettysburg. On June 30th, while three of his corps (2nd, 5th, and 6th) were still south of the creek, three others (11th, 3rd, and 12th) were spread out on a broad front north of it, and the 1st Corps, with Buford's cavalry brigade, had been sent forward towards Gettysburg to gain touch of the enemy.* Thus both the armies, with their concentration still incomplete, were converging on the little town. Neither Meade nor Lee had any very precise knowledge of the situation, and the great battle thus

* Meade's corps commanders were :—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st | Corps, | General Reynolds. | 6th | Corps, | General Sedgwick. |
| 2nd | ,, | General Hancock. | 11th | ,, | General Howard. |
| 3rd | ,, | General Sickles. | 12th | ,, | General Slocum. |
| 5th | ,, | General Sykes. | | | |

A Federal army corps was not more than half the strength of a corps on the Confederate side, and there was about the same proportion between Federal and Confederate infantry divisions.

began by a collision between the advanced troops, and the chance of war dominated the opening moves of the decisive struggle.

Late on June 30th Buford's cavalry brigade marched into Gettysburg. The citizens reported that some Confederate horsemen had been in the town that day, to collect information and requisition a supply of boots; and fugitives from the neighbouring country told of gray-coated regiments near at hand to the westward, on the Chambersburg turnpike. Buford's men went out in that direction and formed an outpost line across the road, with their advanced "pickets"—or, as we would say, sentries and sentry-groups—in the woods and along the banks of Willoughby Run.

The Gettysburg of 1863 was a small country town, with streets laid out at right angles, dividing it into regular "blocks." On the north side was an unfinished line of railway. From the town straight well-made roads ran in various directions, so that it was a centre for all the chief lines of communication between the Susquehanna and the Potomac. West of the town a low range of hills ran southward from a prominent knoll known as Oak Hill. About a mile and a half south of Oak Hill stood a massive building with a small cupola—the Lutheran Seminary—from which the range is known in the records of the battle as the "Seminary Ridge." It was covered throughout a great part of its length with patches of open woods, easily traversed by troops. South of the town, opposite the Seminary Ridge, was a stony

hill, on which was the cemetery of Gettysburg, a walled enclosure with a large arched gatehouse. This height was known as Cemetery Hill. It formed the northern point of another range running southwards, and roughly parallel to the Seminary Ridge. This second range is the "Cemetery Ridge" of the battle records. At its southern end are two round craggy knolls rising above it, known as "Round Top" and "Little Round Top." At the back of Cemetery Ridge, on its east side, runs the turnpike road from Gettysburg to Taneytown. Just south of Cemetery Hill there is a depression in the ridge, through which comes the road from Emmetsburg to join the "Taneytown 'pike." The Emmetsburg road runs along a line of rising ground branching from Cemetery Ridge. On the east side of Cemetery Hill is Culps Hill, beyond which the ground falls away in a succession of lower heights. On all the hills there was a considerable amount of wood, and the upper heights are broken and rocky in many places. The valleys were pasture and agricultural land, with here and there groups of farm buildings, mostly constructed of wood. A glance at the map will help to make clear this general description of the battlefield.

The first shots were fired about half-past five on the morning of Wednesday, July 1st. At sunrise Buford had sent patrols forward across Willoughby Run. Presently they fell back with the news that the enemy was approaching by the Chambersburg 'pike. Then over the rising ground in front came

the leading files of the 1st Division of Hill's Corps. They were received with a crackle of rifle fire from the pickets along the stream, and deployed a skirmishing line which briskly replied.

As the firing line of the attack was steadily reinforced Buford fell back to the slope east of the stream, and posted his dismounted cavalry along fences and walls in good cover, bringing a battery of horse artillery into action to support them. He showed such a bold front, and his men shot so well, that he was able to hold his own single-handed for some hours. He had sent messengers back in hot haste to hurry up Reynolds and the 1st Corps. They came marching at their best towards Gettysburg town, urged forward by the ever-increasing roar and rattle of the fight away to their front.

It was nearly ten o'clock when Reynolds's first batteries galloped up, and his sturdy infantry soon followed them. By this time the enemy's line of guns was firing from the ridge west of the stream; four Confederate brigades were in action along the front, and four more were close at hand. Reynolds had come to Buford's help in the nick of time.

As one of his regiments, the 7th Wisconsin, went forward into the battle it was joined by a little man in a blue swallow-tail coat with large brass buttons, wearing a wide-awake hat, and with a long, old-fashioned rifle over his shoulder. It was the farmer John Burns of Gettysburg, come to "be even with the rebs because they had driven off his cows." The soldiers poked fun at him, thinking "no

civilian in his senses would show himself in such a place." One of them offered him a cartridge box; but he slapped his pocket, bulging with ammunition, and said he could get on better without "those new-fangled things." All day old Burns, despite his seventy years, kept his place in the firing line, and limped home in the evening with a bullet through his left foot, and two other wounds. His pluck deserves to be remembered as proof that even a civilian who can shoot may be useful in the day of battle.

The arrival of Reynolds's Corps did more than save Buford. For a while it gave the Federals a decided advantage. Reynolds in person led a counter-attack through the fields south of the Chambersburg road, and drove in the enemy's right. But he was killed by a rifle bullet in the actual firing line. His fall was a severe loss to the Federal cause.

The Confederates, continually reinforced, began to gain ground. Before noon General Howard arrived, and took command of the hard-pressed Federals. The first troops of the 11th Corps were now coming into action—the German regiments eager to wipe out the memory of their failure at Chancellorsville. But Howard soon became aware that the enemy advancing from the westward was not the only force with which he would have to deal. Strong columns of gray-clad troops were reported to be moving on Gettysburg from the northward. It was the 1st Division of Ewell's Corps that was about to come into action. Howard placed part of the 11th Corps

in position to meet this new danger, extending his line to the right, and turning it back in a long curve round the north-west of the town.

Howard was now fighting a battle against ever-increasing odds, to give time for Meade's army to close up, and so prepare the way for a fight on more even terms next day. For three hours the Federals held on gallantly to the high ground at the end of Seminary Ridge, and on the open ground north of Gettysburg. In this stubborn contest, as in so many of the battles of the War of Secession, both sides endured losses heavier than the troops of any European army have stood up against since the sanguinary battles of the Napoleonic wars. The tactics of the day did not as yet recognize that the avoidance of loss was a serious part of the soldier's business. The fighting was not between dispersed lines of skirmishers in open order, but after the opening phase of the fight, the gray and blue infantry, standing in double ranks, shoulder to shoulder, fired into each other at short ranges that made the old muzzle-loader as deadly as the modern repeating rifle. Nowadays field artillery is protected by steel shields, and quick spade and pick work half buries the guns in improvised entrenchments. But in those days batteries took position in the open, in full view of their antagonists. If dogged determination and reckless disregard of loss could have won the battle, Howard's men would have held their ground, but against the numbers opposed to them after three in the afternoon the position became hopeless. The

Confederates were strong enough to work round both the flanks of the Federal position, and at last the word was given to retire, and the line fell back fighting. Unfortunately for Howard, the way for a considerable part of his force lay through the streets of Gettysburg. As they struggled through the town large numbers of prisoners were made by the victorious Confederates pressing upon them and cutting off the retreat of those who failed to take a direct way.

But the Federals were not yet beaten. In good order they took up a new position on the ground which was to be held during the fierce struggle of the next two days—the heights of Cemetery Hill, Culps Hill, and Cemetery Ridge. While Howard was re-forming his line on the new position, with Buford's cavalry guarding his left, General Hancock arrived. He had ridden forward far in advance of his corps, and told Howard he had come to take command. "I am the senior," replied Howard. "I know that," said Hancock; "but I have written orders from General Meade. I will show them to you if you like." There was a moment of dangerous friction. Howard, angered at being thus superseded just when he expected to put a better complexion on the day's fighting, said he did not want to see the orders. "I don't doubt your word, general," he said; "but you can give no orders while I am here." Hancock saved the situation by replying, "Very well, General Howard; I will second any order that you have to give," and added that Meade had also directed him to select a position for the coming battle.

Then he went on to say that he thought the ground on which they stood was the strongest position he had yet seen for a defensive engagement. Howard agreed, and Hancock ended the discussion with, "Very well, sir; I select this as the battlefield." So the chance of war, the accident by which Howard's troops had drifted to the Cemetery Ridge, fixed the ground on which the decisive action was to be fought out.

Lee had by this time reached Seminary Hill, and could see for himself the position of affairs. He was reluctant to bring on a general engagement until Longstreet's Corps had come up, and this force—one-third of his army—would not be available till next day. He therefore ordered Ewell and Hill not to press their advantage any further, and though there was desultory fighting till near sundown, all the serious work of the first day's battle was over.

Opinion is divided as to whether Lee judged rightly in thus holding back his victorious corps commanders. It is true that their men were fatigued with a long march and many hours of fighting under a blazing sun, and they had lost heavily in the actual engagement. But, on the other hand, the Federals, though not beaten, had been very roughly handled, and had lost 5,000 killed and wounded, and as many prisoners, and two guns. The Confederates had the feeling of success, and one effort more might have given them possession of Culps and Cemetery Hills, and so made the whole Gettysburg position useless to the enemy. But it is difficult to discuss satis-

factorily the " might have beens " of war. Howard and Hancock thought that if they had been attacked seriously they could have held their ground, especially as Hancock's Corps was coming on to the ridge, where Meade himself arrived soon after dark.

Meade's army, according to the roll-call returns of June 30th, was over 90,000 strong. But at sundown on July 1st, allowing for the heavy losses of the first day's battle, and deducting troops still on their way to the field, he cannot have had much more than 30,000 effective fighting men on or close to the Gettysburg position. Some of the expected reinforcements could not arrive till late next day. Sedgwick's Corps, nearly 15,000 strong, and the largest unit in the army, was 34 miles away. It reached the position only at 4 p.m. on the 2nd, wearied with a march which, begun in the darkness, had been continued through the long hours of an exceptionally hot summer day. Two other corps had their first troops up a little after 7 a.m., thanks to a forced march during the night.

Lee, owing to the unfortunate separation of Stuart's cavalry from his army, had only very incomplete information as to the general position of the Federals, but he knew enough to feel sure that Meade was still concentrating. Taking the whole fighting strength of the Confederates—after allowing for losses and Stuart's absence—at between 60,000 and 70,000 men, he had on the evening of July 1st close on 50,000 within striking distance. Of his three corps, the 2nd (Ewell) and the 3rd (Hill) were

practically all present. Longstreet had ridden forward to confer with him in the evening. His corps, the 1st, had been marching towards the cannon all day. One division was four miles from Lee's headquarters at sundown. Another came up to the same point shortly before midnight. The reports of the divisional commanders make this certain. Defending himself from the charge of being late in coming into action next day, Longstreet stated in a subsequent discussion that on the evening of July 1st his corps was nineteen or twenty miles from the field. This is true only of its rearmost units. More than half the corps was within two hours' march of the battlefield by midnight.

Longstreet, at the conference on the evening of the first day, proposed to Lee that next day the Confederate army should march round the enemy's left, passing across his front without attacking. This movement would threaten to cut Meade off from Washington, and probably force him to retreat from the Gettysburg ridges without firing a shot. This is true enough. Meade was so anxious about his left that, early on the 2nd, he directed his chief of the staff to prepare the orders for a retreat in the event of its being turned ; and Halleck from Washington had wired to him expressing his anxiety about the left, and advising a prompt retirement if it were seriously endangered. Lee saw the force of Longstreet's argument, but nevertheless rejected his plan. He saw no gain in merely manœuvring Meade out of his position. Campaigns are not decided by

taking possession of this or that bit of ground, but by smashing up the opposing army, and Lee believed he had a fair chance of destroying the Army of the Potomac. He felt himself strong enough to act against both flanks of the Federals, but he meant the decisive attack to be driven home against the centre and left of the enemy on Cemetery Ridge. A success on this side would break in upon the enemy's line of retreat, and interpose the victorious Confederates between the beaten army and its capital. The orders, therefore, were that Ewell on the left was to demonstrate against the Federal right, about Culps Hill, turning the demonstration into a real attack if the enemy weakened that flank to reinforce the centre and left. Hill, in the centre, was to keep the enemy's centre occupied. Longstreet was to drive home the decisive attack against Cemetery Ridge. It was important to act early on July 2nd, before the rearward corps of the enemy could join him.

Nevertheless the attack was delayed till it was late in the afternoon of the long summer day. Hour after hour Meade's position was growing stronger. Three corps of the Federal army had begun their march during the night. They plodded steadily forward in the darkness, and when the sun rose it was soon striking with fierce heat upon their backs as the dense columns of weary men tramped onward mile after mile in clouds of stifling dust, listening for the sounds of a far-off cannonade. Early in the day a whole corps, and battery after battery of reserve artillery, reached the front. They had expected to

arrive in the midst of a hard-fought battle; but except for an occasional crackle of rifle fire as a skirmish broke out on the opposing picket lines, all was peaceful among the ridges and valleys south of Gettysburg. Along the Federal position staff officers were guiding troops to their ground, and working parties were busy felling trees, digging rifle-pits, piling up rocks and stones into rough breastworks. Along the north end of Seminary Ridge, and on the ground between Cemetery Hill and the town, masses of gray-clad infantry could be seen among the trees, and rows of guns stood waiting in silence for the signal to open fire. The attack had been expected at dawn. Meade and his generals could not understand the long respite allowed them to strengthen their hold on the range of hills they had chosen for their battle-ground.

The occupation of the position had not been carried out precisely on the lines which Meade had planned. Sickles, with the 3rd Corps, had been directed to take post along the southern part of Cemetery Ridge, with his extreme flank on the Round Tops. But he did not like the position, and took it upon himself to alter it. In front of the ridge the ground fell away rapidly to the undulating valley, from which it again rose to the long spur followed by the Emmetsburg road. Sickles saw in this advanced elevation a position that might soon be held by hostile artillery, and thought that it would be better to have his own guns there, even though the outlying ridge was somewhat lower than the ground originally assigned to

him. So he moved his corps forward, its right being placed along the Emmetsburg road, its left thrown back towards, but not reaching, the Round Tops. There was a gap between his right and the rest of the Federal line, and his left was dangerously exposed. Meade did not like the arrangement, but did not insist on its being changed. When the fighting began he had seriously to weaken his centre and right in order to help Sickles to defend this advanced position, and to provide for the protection of its exposed flanks.

Just before the attack opened Sedgwick's Corps began to arrive, weary with a forced march of more than thirty miles, but fit and eager for battle. Meade had now all his army in hand, and could face the coming struggle with an easy mind.

And with the long delay Lee's best chance of victory had vanished. To attack such a position, he should have had superior numbers. He was now not quite equal in strength to the defence. There should have been ample time to have everything ready for the attack by 9 a.m. at latest, but it was not till 3.30 p.m. that Longstreet's Corps was at last in position on the Confederate right. It had simply crawled to the ground assigned to it. Longstreet tried afterwards to throw the blame for the delay on Lee's staff, alleging, amongst other reasons for it, that unnecessarily elaborate precautions were taken to keep the movement of the troops out of sight of the Federal lines. But the fault was his own. He showed a strange lack of energy, an incompre-

hensible disregard of the value of time. He waited needlessly for a belated brigade to join him. Can it be that he felt chagrined at Lee having rejected his plan of operations, and so acted with a listless lack of interest in the task allotted to him?

When at last Lee was satisfied that Longstreet was on or near his part of the battle-ground, the Confederate batteries on the left and centre opened fire against Culps and Cemetery Hills, and the Federal guns replied. Longstreet's artillery carried on the cannonade to the right, and swarms of gray-coated skirmishers began moving forward towards the Emmetsburg road ridge. As the attack developed rapidly on this side, Meade, realizing that it was the danger-point, sent orders to General Sykes, who was in reserve behind his right, to move his corps (the 5th) to the support of Sickles. Meade himself rode to the left to watch the fight there more closely, and while personally directing the movement of reinforcements for the firing line had his horse shot under him.

The right and left of Sickles's line met at a sharp angle at the plantation known as the Peach Orchard on the outlying ridge. From this point his left was thrown back towards Round Top. Longstreet's attack was hurled against both faces of the salient thus formed in the Federal front,—General M'Law's Division against the right along the ridge, General Hood's against the flank. The troops holding the Peach Orchard were thus brought under a deadly cross-fire. A projecting point in a battle line is

always liable to become, like the salient of a fortress, the focus of the assault. Longstreet saw that to win the orchard was to clear the Emmetsburg road and break through Sickles's defence, shattering the key-stone of the arch. Regiment after regiment was sent against it, and on the Federal side wave after wave of reinforcements pressed forward to sustain the defence. The ground on which this stubborn fight went on for two hours of the summer evening is spoken of in records of the battle as the "death angle," so terrible was the loss of life.

At the outset of the attack Hood, on the extreme right of the advance, had been informed by his scouts that Round Top was occupied only by a post of Federal signallers. He sent a message to Longstreet asking for permission to seize it, and urging that by diverting the main force of the assault in that direction the Federal position might be turned, and a costly frontal attack avoided. Longstreet replied that he had Lee's orders to make the frontal attack, and therefore could not entertain the suggestion. But the attraction of the Round Tops was too much for the Confederates, and a brigade dashed off to seize the hills. Sykes's Corps was just then moving to reinforce the Federal left, and a brigade was detached to secure the Round Tops. Federals and Confederates, advancing from opposite sides, raced each other for the wooded knolls. The Federals won the race, and a couple of batteries came up with them. The drivers trotted their teams over the rocky ridges and through roadless clumps of wood

in a way that suggested disaster at each moment, but the guns were got into position without accident, four of them well down the slope between the Round Tops in the mass of rocks and boulders locally known as the "Devil's Den."

The Confederates were now fighting their way forward among rocks and bushes, eager to drive the Federals from the broken ground and the wooded heights of the Round Tops. It was a recklessly daring fight at close quarters. Sometimes the bayonet was used, but mostly men shot at each other at point-blank distance. Some took cover among the boulders; others, with mad disregard of danger, stood erect upon them to get a temporary vantage-ground, though, as often as not, these daring sharpshooters dropped at once riddled with bullets. The Devil's Den rocks were stormed, and three guns were captured; and then the attack, reinforced by Hood with fresh troops, began to fight its way upwards through the woods of the steep hillsides.

Meanwhile, under the continual pressure of fresh assaults, the defence of Peach Orchard gave way, and Sickles and Sykes's Corps began to fall back from the advanced position, still disputing every inch of ground. Sickles was badly wounded, and there was heavy loss among his brigadiers, colonels, and field officers—the result of the custom of the time, when mounted officers used to remain on horseback even with a firing line. The mounted officer thus became an easy target for aimed hostile fire.

It was only after the war of 1870 that it was recognized that for field officers of infantry to remain mounted in close action was uselessly to sacrifice valuable lives, and disorganize the leadership of the battle.

Between the abandoned position along the Emmetsburg road and the main line of Cemetery Ridge a swell of the ground along a little brook afforded a position where the retiring Federals made a stubborn stand till the sun went down and darkness ended the day's fighting. In this last phase of the struggle the Federal artillery played a splendid part, batteries being pushed boldly forward to fire in the faces of the advancing Confederates. At one dangerous point a rush of the men in gray was stopped by a Massachusetts battery remaining in action when everything else to right and left had retired. Nearly half the gunners and drivers, and 65 out of 80 horses, were shot down. The guns had to be temporarily abandoned, but a heavy fire of rifles and artillery prevented the Confederates from carrying them off, and after nightfall they were rescued and brought back to Cemetery Ridge.

Longstreet had thus driven the Federals from the Emmetsburg road position, and his right attack had secured a footing on the Round Tops. After dark the Federals had withdrawn to the high ground of Cemetery Ridge from the position where they had made their last stand in the valley. The success of the Confederate right would doubtless have been more complete if Ewell and the left had been more

active and more timely in their operations. Hill, in the centre, had no more to do than to engage the opposing Federal centre with a long-range fire of guns and rifles. Late in the day he ventured on an infantry attack. Ewell was to have made a false attack on the enemy's right, in order to prevent Meade from withdrawing his reserves from that flank to oppose Longstreet; and the demonstration was intended to be sufficiently active to enable Ewell to keep in close touch with the enemy, and if he felt that the defence was weakening, he was to turn the false attack into a real assault on Culps and Cemetery Hills. Ewell's action against those positions was, however, so obviously unreal that Meade not only sent away Sykes's Corps to the right to help Sickles and secure the Round Tops, but also stripped Culps Hill of all but a mere handful of defenders. It was not till near sunset that Ewell realized that the force in his front had been greatly reduced. This meant that he had failed to do his work, and allowed those he should have kept occupied to be diverted to the fight against Longstreet. But it gave him a chance of still doing something, so, late as it was, he attacked the two hills. Early's Division made such a fierce attempt on Cemetery Hill that he nearly won it. On the extreme flank Johnson's Division advanced in the twilight against the eastern slopes of Culps Hill. The crest was held by a mere handful of defenders; but though they had to abandon the eastern end of the hilltop, they held on to its western end, thanks to solid breast-

works of felled trees, which they had been piling up all day.

When at last the firing ceased the situation was this. The Federal left had been driven in upon the main position, but that position, from Culps Hill on the north to the Round Tops on the south, was intact, except where at each end the Confederates had obtained a partial possession of the outlying hills. On Culps and on Round Top the men in blue and the men in gray were close to each other in the darkness of the woods. Both sides had lost heavily. Thousands of dead and wounded strewed the hard-contested ground in front of the Federal left. After dark on both sides many prisoners were taken —men who had been separated from their comrades wandering into the hostile picket lines. Lee counted the day's work a success, though an incomplete one. But he could afford less than his opponent the heavy toll of life by which this success—such as it was—had been bought. Meade, though anxious about his left, was also well satisfied. At a council of war held late that evening in the farmhouse behind the Cemetery Ridge, which he had made his headquarters, the only question discussed was whether the Federals were to remain on the defensive next day, or to attack the Confederate positions at sunrise. It was decided to await another attack, and to assume the offensive only locally on the right, in order to clear the Confederates off from Culps Hill.

Lee received some important reinforcements in the early hours of the third day: Stuart's cavalry had

regained touch, and Pickett's splendid division of Virginian infantry regiments, which had till now been guarding the line of communication, marched up to the front. The Confederate commander made a complete change in his plans for the day. The general idea of the attack was this. Ewell was to press the advantage he had won at Culps Hill, in order to compel Meade to reinforce his right. Meanwhile the Confederate artillery would be massed in a long line from Seminary Hill southwards to Peach Orchard and the ridge followed by the Emmetsburg road, the position captured by Longstreet the day before. After a heavy bombardment of the Federal position on Cemetery Ridge, which it was hoped would silence the enemy's batteries and severely shake his infantry, a strong column of assault, the main body of which would be formed of Pickett's 5,000 fresh troops, would be launched against the Federal centre. Stuart was to be in position on Ewell's extreme left, and was to break in upon the rear of the Federal position, and help to complete the destruction of the enemy after Pickett's charge had forced him from the ridge.

Long before even the artillery preparation for the projected attack could begin, there was hard fighting on the right of the Federal position, and Meade got in the first blow. Ewell had reinforced Johnson with some of Early's infantry, and in the twilight the Confederates were forming on Culps Hill to attack the works at its western end. As the sun rose a storm of shells burst among them. Several Federal

batteries had been already placed in position to take the attack in flank, and as the Confederates moved forward through this fire two Federal brigades, instead of awaiting the assault, dashed out to make a counter-attack. For four hours the struggle went on at close quarters, surging backwards and forwards in the woods as either side threw new troops into the fighting line. At last the Confederates were driven from the hill, all the ground they had rushed the night before being recaptured.

Fighting continued on the Federal right for a considerable time after the recapture of the hill, Ewell's Corps being in action on a prolonged curve that encircled the enemy's flank. Stuart's effort to break in behind it proved a failure, his ride round the Federal lines bringing him into conflict with Gregg's cavalry division well to the rear. Many of the cavalry actions of the War of Secession were only rifle fights between lines of dismounted men, but in the action of July 3rd the opposing cavalry met each other in more than one charge, resulting in a hand-to hand mêlée with sabre and pistol.

Meade was strong enough in cavalry to guard his left with Kilpatrick's Division, besides diverting Gregg to check Stuart. Kilpatrick used his cavalry and horse artillery to good purpose, threatening the Confederate right, and forcing Hood to abandon any further attacks on the Round Tops, and form a strong line facing south to protect the flank of his own army.

But all these were the minor incidents of the day.

Its decisive episode was the battle in the centre. General Hunt, who commanded Meade's artillery, tells how during the morning hours, while the battle was raging round Culps Hill, he saw battery after battery coming into position along the main front of the Confederates. The artillery of both armies was made up partly of rifled, partly of smooth-bore guns, and the distance between the Federal position on Cemetery Ridge and the line of crests on which the hostile batteries were being posted was not more than three-quarters of a mile—a close and deadly range for the rifled guns; but artillery tactics were still influenced by the traditions of smooth-bore days. By noon the Confederates had massed 140 guns in a long line. From the Federal position only the guns were visible, waiting silently for the order to open fire, while the gray infantry were kept out of sight in the woods and behind the ridges. Hunt confesses that he was in doubt as to what these preparations meant, and his first impression was that Lee intended to use this long array of cannon to play upon and hold in check the Federal centre, while he concentrated his infantry for a great attack on the right, where fighting was already going on. He brought up about 70 guns to oppose the hostile artillery, keeping some batteries in reserve behind the Cemetery Ridge, to be sent up to whatever point might ultimately be attacked.

Unseen from the Federal lines, Lee had massed behind his guns the troops chosen for the infantry attack. That morning there had again been a marked

divergence of opinion between the commander-in-chief and General Longstreet. The latter had once more urged that an attempt should be made to turn the enemy's left. But Lee replied that he had decided to break through the centre, sending forward an assaulting force against the low crest of Cemetery Ridge, near its junction with Cemetery Hill. Pickett would lead the attack, and Longstreet would be given two divisions of Hill's Corps—Pettigrew's and Pender's—with which to support him.

Longstreet objected to the plan. "The three divisions," he said, "will give me 15,000 men. I have been a soldier, I may say, from the ranks up to the position I now hold. I have been in pretty much all kinds of skirmishes, from those of two or three soldiers up to those of an army corps, and I think I may safely say that there never was a body of 15,000 men who could make that attack successfully."

Lee declined to discuss the matter further, and Longstreet, discontented at this summary rejection of his view, set to work to make his arrangements for carrying out a plan which he expected to fail. It was unfortunate for Lee that he had no longer for his right-hand man a soldier like Jackson, who could put all his heart into any enterprise assigned to him.

Pickett, unlike his immediate chief, was delighted at the chance offered him, eager for action, confident of success. His division was drawn up in three lines on the reverse slope of the ridge. The two other

divisions were on his left; they were to advance after him, in echelon—that is, the right flank of each following up the left of that which preceded it. The order to attack would be given as soon as the Confederate guns had bombarded the enemy's position and silenced or produced some effect on his batteries.

To Colonel Alexander, commanding a group of batteries of the 1st Corps, Longstreet committed the general direction of the artillery engagement. Alexander was not a little anxious about his task. There had already been two days of fighting, and the ammunition supplies for the guns were running low. Unless the enemy were soon silenced the bombardment could not be continued. But so far as he could ascertain, his own guns outnumbered those opposed to them nearly two to one, and this was a hopeful element in the situation. The signal for beginning the cannonade was to be the firing of two guns by Longstreet's orders, as soon as the infantry were ready.

Though there had been firing going on for hours to right and left, as yet not a shot had been fired in the centre. At one o'clock the two signal guns rang out, and immediately the Confederate batteries opened fire. Some 70 guns replied from the opposite height. Dense clouds of smoke soon covered the ridges, and it was difficult for the gunners to see their targets. General Hunt, the Federal artillery commander, rode down the back of Cemetery Ridge to bring up his reserve batteries from the place where he had posted them on the Taneytown road. When he arrived there he found a number of dead horses

and exploded ammunition wagons. He had some difficulty in finding the batteries, for almost the first shells fired by the Confederates had flown over the ridge, burst among them, and done terrible damage, and they had shifted their position. After ordering them up to the ridge, he rode towards Meade's headquarters at the farm, hoping to find there a staff officer who would take a message to the general. The farm was deserted. Dead horses lay in front of it, and the house had been struck by shells, some of which burst around it while Hunt was paying his hurried visit. He then realized to his satisfaction that the fire of many of the enemy's batteries must be too high. The Confederate shells were flying in scores well above the crest of the ridge, and bursting far behind it.

Returning to the crest, he found that though some of the batteries were suffering considerable loss, the infantry lying down on the reverse slope or sheltered behind natural cover or improvised breastworks were fairly safe. He knew that he was outnumbered seriously in guns, and in the dense smoke it was difficult to control the fire of those he had. There was no sign of increased activity on the enemy's part on either wing, and it looked as if the cannonade were the prelude to an infantry attack on the centre. He decided to draw the attack, economize ammunition, and be ready to turn his guns on the assaulting columns when they advanced. He therefore ordered several batteries to withdraw temporarily over the ridge, and the rest to slacken their fire. He had hardly

given the order when he received directions from Meade to the same effect.

As to what was passing on the Confederate side there are very full details available.* Some of these are of special interest, as showing the difficulties of command at a critical moment. Longstreet was inclined to hesitate. Before giving the order for the firing of the signal guns he had sent a note to Colonel Alexander in which he said :—

"If the artillery fire does not have the effect to drive off the enemy or greatly demoralize him so as to make our efforts pretty certain, I would prefer that you should not advise General Pickett to make the charge. I shall rely a great deal on your good judgment to determine the point, and shall expect you to let General Pickett know when the moment offers."

This note rather startled the artillery commander. To carry out the attack on Lee and Longstreet's responsibility was one thing ; to be asked to decide if and when it should be made was a more serious business. So he wrote to Longstreet :—

"General I will only be able to judge of the effect of our fire on the enemy by his return fire ; for his infantry is but little exposed to view, and the smoke will obscure the whole field. If, as I infer from your note, there is any alternative to this attack, it should be carefully considered before opening our fire ; for it will take all the artillery ammunition we have left to test this one thoroughly, and if the result is unfavourable, we will have none left for another effort. And even if this is entirely successful, it can only be so at a bloody cost."

The reply was a definite order to open fire

* See the numerous narratives in "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. iii.

and launch the charge as soon as there were signs that the cannonade was effective. General Wright, one of Hill's brigadiers, was beside Alexander when the order came. Pointing across the valley, he said to the gunner officer, "It is not so hard to go there as it looks. I was nearly there with my brigade yesterday. The trouble is to stay there; the whole Yankee army is there in a bunch."

When the Confederate artillery opened, all the enemy's line from Cemetery Hill down to Round Top blazed out in reply; and the reply was effective. Men fell fast around the Confederate guns. Infantry soldiers had to be requisitioned to help in serving them. It was not easy to make out what was happening on the other side of the valley, but there was the natural disposition to conclude that the Federals were suffering at least as heavily. Alexander tells how the sudden diminution of their fire led him to give the decisive order :—

"Before the cannonade opened I had made up my mind to give Pickett the order to advance within fifteen or twenty minutes after it began. But when I looked at the full development of the enemy's batteries, and knew that his infantry was generally protected from our fire by stone walls and swells of the ground, I could not bring myself to give the word. It seemed madness to launch infantry into that fire, with nearly three-quarters of a mile to go unde a July sun I let the fifteen minutes pass, and twenty and twenty-five, hoping vainly for something to turn up. Then I wrote to Pickett : 'If you are coming at all, you must come at once, or I cannot give you proper support; but the enemy's fire has not slackened at all, at least 18 guns are still firing from the cemetery itself.' Five minutes after sending that message the enemy's fire suddenly began to slacken, and the guns in the cemetery limbered up and vacated the position. We

Confederates often did such things as that to save our ammunition for use against infantry, but I had never before seen the Federals withdraw their guns simply to save them up for the infantry fight. So I said, 'If he does not run in fresh batteries there for five minutes this is our fight.' I looked anxiously with my glass, and the five minutes passed without a sign of life on the deserted position, still swept by our fire and littered with dead men and horses and fragments of disabled carriages. Then I wrote Pickett urgently: 'For God's sake come quick. The 18 guns are gone. Come quick, or my ammunition won't let me support you properly."

Pickett passed the word to prepare to advance, rode over to Longstreet, saluted, and told him, "I am going to move forward, sir," and then galloped to the head of his division. The gray lines went splendidly onward up the reverse slope and across the crest of the Seminary Ridge, topped with row on row of glittering bayonets. As they came up through the scattered wood of the crest, Longstreet galloped to Alexander's position. It was just 1.40 p.m., forty minutes since the signal guns were fired.

Alexander told the general he thought the outlook was now more hopeful, but he was anxious about the shortness of his ammunition. "Then stop Pickett," said Longstreet, "and replenish your ammunition." Alexander replied that to cease fire would be to allow the enemy to recover, and that very few shells could be got from the reserve. To hold back now was to lose the battle. "I don't wan't to make this attack," said Longstreet. "I would stop it now but that General Lee ordered it, and expects it to go on. I don't see how it can succeed." Ominous words from a general in command. If he had believed in

success, he might perhaps have supported the attempt more vigorously.

Pickett's Virginians were now marching through the intervals of the batteries, which ceased fire just there to let them pass, while right and left the cannonade continued. One of the brigadiers, General Garnett, saluted Longstreet and exchanged a friendly word with Alexander as he passed. Garnett was muffled in an old blue overcoat, though the July sun was blazing at its hottest. He had risen from his bed in a fever hospital to take his brigade into action, and he was going to his death.

As the division went down the slope of the ridge, marching with the ordered precision of a state review, with the supporting troops coming over the crest to its left rear, every gun on the Federal side reopened fire, and the three batteries which had left the cemetery galloped back to the front, unlimbered, and joined in. A storm of shell burst over and amongst the gray lines. Horrible gaps were blown in them, but the men closed up and went on. The Confederate batteries were now firing over their heads, but the Federals fired not a shot at the hostile artillery, but devoted all their energies to the destruction of the advancing infantry.

Alexander selected three batteries that still had a fair supply of ammunition left, limbered them up, and moved down the slope to Pickett's right rear, intending to help him by coming into action at closer quarters. The guns passed over ground thickly strewn with fallen men. Alexander noticed among them one poor

fellow, who raised himself on his elbow and looked at the gunners with a ghastly face, from which a shell burst had swept the jaws away.

The advance had now crossed half the intervening ground, and as it came within range of the enemy's infantry a roar of rifle fire burst out all along the opposite ridge. A brigade of Federals swung forward to take Pickett in flank with a fire from the right. Alexander halted his guns and opened on this part of the enemy's line.

Pickett's men were now going up the front of Cemetery Ridge. They seemed to be moving with an impulse that no destruction could stop or even delay. To their left the supporting divisions were advancing as steadily, regardless of loss, though they were not so severely tried as the leading division, which drew the heaviest fire. Crossing the fences of the Emmetsburg road, the formation of Pickett's Division became somewhat disordered. The three lines seemed to close into one great mass, a sea of bayonets, above which rose the battle flags. Through the showers of bullets and the screaming rush of shells the crowd of men surged up to Cemetery Ridge, their charging yell ringing out above the din of the fight. To those who watched eagerly from the opposite side of the valley, the gray mass seemed to be suddenly swallowed up in the dense smoke clouds that hung low upon the ridge.

They were in amongst the Federal guns. Teams and limbers galloped to the rear, and as the charge burst through the line of artillery it seemed for a

moment that the fight would be won by the men in gray. But they met face to face unbroken lines of infantry, to whom fresh supports were coming up at the double. An enfilading fire of guns and rifles tore their flank. Volley on volley flashed in their faces. Some fired back in reply, others struggled on till bayonet met bayonet.

To their left, Pettigrew's Division had pushed up to Cemetery Hill, protecting them effectually on that flank. The division was made up of four brigades from Virginia, Tennessee, Mississippi, and North Carolina. Unlike Pickett's men, they had been in action all the day before, and had lost heavily. Their share in the charge is sometimes overlooked, so much has attention been riveted on the gallantry of the leading division. But Pettigrew's men nearly succeeded. The Tennessee regiments actually forced their way over the low wall of the cemetery, and fought hand to hand with its garrison. The 2nd Mississippi also crossed bayonets with the Federals, and lost half its force in the fight.

The decisive struggle on the crest of the ridge did not last long. Presently out of the smoke the fragments of Pickett's Brigade were seen retiring. The young general was still in the saddle, rallying the broken, confused mass of beaten men, but his three brigadiers were all down. On his flank Pettigrew was forced back. Badly wounded, he still rode among his men. The retiring Confederates were fired on from every gun and rifle within range, and suffered heavily as they recrossed the valley. Some hun-

dreds, who had broken into the Federal lines and been cut off from their comrades, were made prisoners.

The great effort had failed. General Lee left his staff and rode to meet Pickett's men as they came back into the Confederate lines. It is likely that he had come to this part of the position expecting that the Federals would at once attack. He knew the battle was lost, but he was calm and alert. To the retiring men he said: "It is not your fault. We must try and do our best with what is left." His kindly nature and his complete self-command were shown by his checking a staff officer who spurred a tired horse. A British officer present as a spectator, Colonel Fremantle of the Coldstream Guards, was struck by the bearing of the defeated men. "There was," he wrote, "much less noise, fuss, or confusion of orders than at any ordinary field-day; the men as they were rallied in the woods were brought up in detachments, and lay down quietly and coolly in the positions assigned to them."

After the repulse of the great charge the firing gradually ceased on both sides, and the three days' battle was over. On the Confederate side there was a general expectation that Meade would follow up the repulse of Pickett by an advance against Seminary Ridge; but the victors were themselves exhausted, and not knowing how short of ammunition their opponents were, did not regard an attack in the face of the 140 guns on the ridge as practicable. Longstreet afterwards said that he could certainly have repelled such an attack. "I had Hood and

M'Law's Divisions, which had not been engaged; I had a heavy force of artillery, and I have no doubt I should have given those who tried as bad a reception as Pickett received." As a matter of fact, part of Hood's Division had been in action against Kilpatrick's cavalry, but Longstreet had several brigades that did not fire a shot. Had he thrown these forward on Pickett's right, it would have kept the Federal left busy, and saved Pickett from the enfilading fire that tore his flank. Many who watched the charge believed that but for this it would have succeeded. There is no doubt that Lee fully expected Longstreet to use every available man to support the attack, on which everything was staked, but with his chivalrous generosity he never blamed his subordinate. On the contrary, after the battle he told him that perhaps if he had accepted his plan for turning the enemy's left all might have been well. Yet he must have been thinking of Longstreet's halting support when he said years after that if he had had Jackson at Gettysburg he might have marched into Washington.

The losses of the three days' battle amounted to 19,000 killed and wounded on the Federal side, and 18,000 on that of the Confederates, or 24 per cent. of the forces engaged, nearly one man in every four. A large number of generals and field officers were among the casualties.

Meade had fought a strictly defensive battle, and fought it well, with excellent co-operation among his corps commanders. But even after it was plain

that he was the victor he made no attempt to attack the Confederate lines, though Lee's right still held ground it had won on the second day. All through July 4th the Confederates remained on the position, busily entrenching every yard of the front, and expecting an attack from hour to hour. Meanwhile the baggage trains and long convoys of wounded had been sent to the rear. Then Lee made a masterly retreat through the passes of the Cumberland valley and across the Potomac, offering battle to Meade on the bank of the river, but in such a strongly-prepared position that he did not venture to attack.

During the retreat news came that Vicksburg had fallen. It was a dark hour for the Confederacy. The North was exultant. The news that victory had crowned the three days' struggle round Gettysburg reached Washington, New York, and the other great centres on the Fourth of July, and made the national festival a day of wild rejoicing, dimmed only by the terrible tidings of the loss by which success had been bought.

Lee had displayed all his old mastery of war in the retreat. In the battle he had been badly served by some of his subordinates, and his staff had failed to secure due co-operation between the various attacks. The final effort had failed for want of a sufficient artillery preparation, and for the lack of support. It had for a moment been near success, even in the face of the splendidly organized defence with which Meade and Hancock met it. That Pickett's charge ever reached the Federal lines is

a marvel. Seven years later, a similar effort of the German Guards on the field of Gravelotte failed even more disastrously, and only then was it recognized that in the face of modern weapons the great massed infantry charge across a wide stretch of fire-swept ground had become an impossibility.

The field of Gettysburg is now a national possession of the great American Republic. On every hard-contested hillside monuments to the fallen leaders and the regiments that played a foremost part in the strife mark out the stages of the battle. The graves of the dead are lovingly guarded, and are decked with flowers as the anniversary comes round. North and South alike honour the men who fought so well and died so fearlessly. The memory of their valour has become part of the common heritage of a happily united people.

## CHAPTER V.

### SADOWA.

*July* 3, 1866.

FOR seven years after Solferino, and especially during the first part of this period, there was a general disposition to acknowledge that France was the first military power of the Continent. The emperor was occupied with schemes of colonial expansion in Africa and Asia, and an unfortunate attempt at empire-making in Mexico; but the Chauvinist or Jingo school of French politicians were dreaming of further military exploits in Europe, and in the French schools it was part of the official teaching that the Rhine from Basel to the sea was the "natural" frontier of France. Sooner or later, it was said, the emperor would try to reduce this theory to practice.

Germany was a confederation of more than fifty states—kingdoms, grand duchies, duchies, principalities, free cities—with Austria and Prussia as permanent rivals for the control of the Federal Diet that met at Frankfurt-on-Main. Prussia counted among the second-rate military powers, and no one in the

early sixties foresaw the great changes that were so soon to make the Prussian king the most formidable rival of the French emperor.

King William I. came to the throne in 1861, after having for a few years governed Prussia as regent during the long illness of his predecessor. Born in 1797, he had entered the Prussian army in the year after Jena, and served as a young officer in the campaign of France against Napoleon I. in 1814. When he came to the throne, he began at once to prepare for the double task of making Prussia supreme in Germany, and then using the power of united Germany to put an end to the French menace on the Rhine.

He had for his chief helpers in this twofold task three remarkable men—his Prime Minister, Von Bismarck ; the Minister of War, Von Roon ; and the Chief of the Staff, Von Moltke. A reorganization and increase of the army was carried into effect in defiance of the Prussian Parliament, which refused to vote the necessary supplies. Then an alliance with Austria was formed to enforce the historic claim that the Danish duchies of Schleswig and Holstein belonged to the German Confederation. The Danish War of 1864 ended with a joint occupation of the duchies by Austrian and Prussian troops ; but from the first there was tension between the Allies, and within two years Bismarck had formed an alliance with the new kingdom of Italy against Austria, and at the same time put forward claims for Prussia in the Frankfurt Diet

and in the negotiations as to the settlement of the duchies that challenged the old predominance of the Hapsburgs in Germany.

The quarrel came to a head in the early summer of 1866. Most of the minor states of Germany ranged themselves on the side of Austria at the outbreak of the war, and the general impression was that Bismarck and King William were risking a disaster for Prussia that might prove as fatal as that of Jena. It was anticipated that in any case there would be a prolonged struggle, and the French emperor, watching the conflict, was prepared to intervene if the opportunity offered, and claim compensation on the Rhine for any increase of territory obtained by the victor, whoever that might be.

The war lasted only seven weeks. It was a surprise and a revelation to all Europe. Its lessons led to radical changes in the war methods and the peace organization of every army on the Continent. Sadowa, the crowning victory of the Prussian arms, was an epoch-making battle.

After Jena the first Napoleon had tried to cripple the military power of Prussia by embodying in the treaty of peace a clause limiting the Prussian army to 42,000 men. Hitherto, long service had been the rule of European armies. But Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, who reorganized the Prussian army after Jena, adopted a system of short service in order to pass as many men as possible through the ranks, and form a reserve of trained soldiers. By this method, when the national uprising against Napo-

leon came in 1813, Prussia was able at once to put more than 100,000 men in the field. This system of using the peace army as a training school for a huge reserve, and expanding it into a large war army on the approach of hostilities, became the basis of the Prussian military organization. To this was added the plan of permanently localizing every regiment, brigade, division, and army corps, so that the men of a town, village, or district fought side by side in war, under the leaders who had trained them in peace. This system of a small standing army and a large reserve was economical. It enabled a comparatively poor state like Prussia to provide an excellent armament and equipment for a large war army. The infantry was armed with a breech-loading rifle in 1855, before any other government had ventured on such a change. Under King William the Krupp factories began to provide the artillery with rifled breech-loading cannon. But most important of all was the work of the general staff, organized and trained by Von Moltke. Its business was not only to collect intelligence and prepare plans of operations well in advance of any possible conflict, but also to direct the training of the troops and their leaders, and to inspire the whole army with a common ideal as to the methods to be followed in war. Individual initiative was encouraged. Generals were taught that they must take the responsibility of acting for themselves without waiting for detailed orders, and the orders issued by Von Moltke in war were always of the briefest—a

short note on the situation, an indication of the object in view, directions to the corps commanders as to their line of advance; it was left to each in his own sphere to work out the details.

The tactical methods taught to the troops were eminently practical. The infantry fought on a system that united some of the advantages of line and column. The battalion was divided into four strong companies, each of about 240 rifles, and the company was again divided into three *zugs* or sections. The normal formation was the line of company columns, each with its three sections formed two deep, one behind the other, and spaced out so that there was room for the whole to deploy into line. On going into action the leading section was thrown out as skirmishers. But until the second stage of the war of 1870 the massed column of the Napoleonic wars was still employed to drive home a decisive attack.

Few had marked the efficient methods of the Prussian army in the short war of 1864, which saw no great battles, and was chiefly remarkable for the prolonged siege and successful assault of the fortified Danish position of Düppel. The war of 1866 was the first trial of the reorganized Prussian army in a really important campaign.

Hanover, Saxony, and the South German States had thrown in their lot with Austria. Prussia had on her side some of the minor states of the north, and they added something to her fighting strength, but the 350,000 men detailed for her field armies were nearly all her own people. The Italian alliance

would force Austria to keep a considerable army in the south for the defence of Venetia. Moltke's estimates of the forces to be opposed to Prussia proved to be very correct. He calculated that after allowing 150,000 men for the army in Italy under the Archduke Albert, the Austrian Army of the North, which would immediately be joined by the Saxons, would (including these) number nearly 300,000 men. Besides these the Hanoverians and South Germans would have to be reckoned with. They would put 120,000 men in the field. The odds were against Prussia; but her enemies were divided. Except the Saxons, the allies of Austria were thinking only of a piecemeal defence of their own territories. This enabled Moltke to content himself with detaching an army of 50,000 men under General Vogel von Falkenstein to deal with them. It was obvious that the whole fortune of the war would turn on the operations against the main Austrian army. Against this, therefore, he directed every man and gun he could spare.

Three Prussian armies were concentrated along the frontiers of Saxony and Austria by the beginning of June. In the centre, about Görlitz, was the 1st Army, 120,000 strong, under Prince Frederick Charles. On the right was the Elbe Army, 50,000 men, under General Herwarth von Bittenfeld. These threatened Saxony, and interposed between the Austrians and the shortest way to Berlin from Bohemia. On the left was the 2nd Army, 130,000 strong, under the Crown Prince of Prussia (afterwards the Emperor Frederick). These were as-

sembled about Neisse, in Silesia, ready to meet a move across the frontier from Moravia, where the Austrian Army of the North was concentrating. These three Prussian armies altogether numbered about 300,000 men.

The king was to command this great army, with Moltke as his chief of the staff and the real inspirer of every movement. Till the end of June, though many battles were fought, the headquarters were at Berlin. Moltke, from his room in the War Office, sent his orders by telegraph, and moved the coloured pins on his large scale maps, like a chess-player engaged in a game by correspondence. It was only when the great crisis was near at hand that he went to the front with the king.

The Austrian emperor had given the command of the northern army to Marshal Benedek. The choice was due to his splendid fight at San Martino on the day of Solferino. At first he refused the position, and asked for a mere corps command. "I am no tactician," he said to the emperor; "choose some one else." But Francis Joseph insisted, and Benedek gave way. He established his headquarters at Olmutz, in Moravia, where an army of more than a quarter of a million men was assembling. Meanwhile Bohemia was held by the 1st Army Corps and a cavalry division.

The Austrians had not completed their preparations when the war began on June 16th. Moltke's plan was to unite his three armies on Austrian territory in Bohemia, after overrunning Saxony.

If the Austrians had been ready and enterprising, it would have meant taking the risk of being beaten in detail, but he knew they were unready and slow. Dresden was occupied by the Elbe Army without resistance, the Saxons retiring into Bohemia. As the Elbe Army and the armies of Frederick Charles and the Crown Prince advanced over the mountains into Bohemia, they fought several battles with Austrian and Saxon detachments, which were too weak to offer very serious opposition.

On June 30th King William and Moltke left Berlin for Bohemia. Bismarck went with them, and wrote to his wife that during the day's journey to the front he saw more Saxon and Austrian prisoners than Prussian soldiers. The situation on June 30th was briefly this. Benedek had brought up his army from Olmutz to the crossings of the Elbe between the fortresses of Josefstadt and Königgrätz, and had passed the river. Immediately to the west of him lay the 1st Prussian Army, with the army of the Elbe close behind it. To the northward, on the upper Elbe, was the Crown Prince, with the 2nd Army. There was a critical moment when Benedek, if he had been quicker in his decisions and movements, might have thrown all his force against the Crown Prince; but he had formed a bad plan of campaign, and his advance across the Elbe had been undertaken with a view to holding the Crown Prince with his right wing, and throwing the rest of his army against Frederick Charles. He was choosing to strike at the more distant instead of the nearer

enemy. On the evening of the 29th he realized his mistake, and next day began to concentrate to the rear, drawing in his most advanced troops and marching back towards the Elbe. He had given up the idea of attack, and was deliberating as to the ground on which he would fight a defensive action.

Moltke, on his arrival at Gitschin on July 1st, brought the Elbe Army up into line on the right of the 1st Army, and began closing up the united force towards Miletin, to bring it nearer to the Crown Prince, who was crossing the upper Elbe on the Austrian right. Wherever touch was obtained with the enemy, the Austrians were seen to be retiring to the eastward. The view adopted at the Prussian headquarters, and under the impression of which Moltke's first orders for July 3rd were written, was that Benedek meant to recross the Elbe and fight a battle in a strong position on its eastern bank, with the river covering his front, and the fortresses of Josefstadt and Königgrätz on his right and left.

King William had gone to bed in his hotel at Gitschin on the evening of July 1st, when Moltke came to his room with news that altered all the plans for next day. A message had come from Prince Frederick Charles, whose headquarters were some miles to the eastward. It was a letter enclosing the report of a daring cavalry officer who, late in the day, had managed to take a close look at the hills that rose on the farther side of the Bistritz River, and across which ran the main road from Gitschin by Sadowa to Königgrätz. It was known earlier in the

day that there were Austrian troops on these hills, but they were supposed to be only a weak rearguard, covering Benedek's retirement across the Elbe. But the cavalry scout had made a ride along the farther bank of the Bistritz. He had been more than once fired on, and had finally been chased by Austrian lancers, and escaped by a hairbreadth. But he had seen enough to be sure that it was no mere rearguard that held the hills. Along miles of front he had found signs of the enemy's presence in force, and in several places entrenchments were being thrown up and trees felled. Evidently Benedek meant to fight with his front to the Bistritz, and the Elbe and its twin fortresses behind him. The next day's march of the Prussian army would mean a colossal battle in its first hours.

New orders were hastily written, and sent off to the Crown Prince to ensure his early co-operation against the Austrian right. Benedek, with his Austrians and Saxons, was between the two Prussian armies; but there was no danger in this, for they were near enough to ensure their junction on the actual battlefield. It was, in fact, a gain that the Crown Prince's army, instead of being in line with that under the immediate command of the king, was already in position to throw all its weight against a flank of the enemy.

The ground on which Benedek had decided to risk the ordeal of battle was well chosen. It was no disadvantage that he had a broad river four miles in his rear, for it was crossed by good bridges, and protected by the guns of two fortresses, and in case

of disaster would secure his retreat. The line of hills ran generally from south to north, sloping gently to the valley in which flows the little river Bistritz, a sluggish stream with stretches of marsh along its course, so that in many places troops cannot pass it. Along the stream are a number of villages built of wood, the most important of which, Sadowa, gives its name to the battle.* From the bridge of Sadowa the road to Königgrätz runs over the hills, passing through a dip below their highest point, which is crowned by the village of Chlum, whose square church tower looks out over the battlefield as the Spia tower looked on that of Solferino. The hills rise and fall into knolls and hollows, and there are numerous villages, farmsteads, and fine country houses. The hedgerows and enclosures give it an almost English look. In July there are wide stretches of growing corn in the open fields; but there are also numerous fir and pine woods, especially at the southern end of the position. Shelter trenches and gun-pits had been dug, and trees felled to form barriers across the roads and on the slopes. Some of the lessons of the American War had been taken to heart by the Austrians.

Along about eight miles of front Benedek had set in battle array an army of 215,000 men, including 770 guns and nearly 24,000 cavalry. It was an army of many nations and languages, for the Emperor of Austria rules a polyglot empire. On the extreme left among the wooded hills were the Saxon allies,

* It is also known as the battle of Königgrätz.

23,000 strong, under their Crown Prince. Then northwards stretched the white-coated Austrian lines, with here and there a dark-green uniformed detachment of Tyrolese rifles. In that long array there were German-speaking Austrians, Czechs of Bohemia, Poles, Croats and Slavs of the south, Italian-speaking recruits from the Adriatic shores, Hungarians and Roumanians from Transylvania. There was some doubt as to whether the Hungarians and Italians had their hearts in the struggle, but most of Benedek's men were in excellent fighting form. They were not discouraged by the minor defeats during the Prussian advance, and news had come from Italy of the Archduke Albert's victory of Custozza, won on the seventh anniversary of Solferino.

On the Prussian side the troops actually set in movement for the battlefield, and near enough to be engaged, numbered 221,000 men, including 27,000 cavalry, and having with them 780 guns. The total of the forces on both sides was thus 436,000 men, with over 1,500 guns. Sadowa ranks, in point of numbers engaged, second among the great battles of the nineteenth century. Only the "battle of nations," at Leipzig in 1813, ranks before it.* The

* According to Otto Berndt (*Die Zahl im Kriege*) the figures for Leipzig stand thus :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Allies..... | 301,500 men | (56,000 cavalry, 1,384 guns). |
| French..... | 171,000 men | (22,000 cavalry, 700 guns). |
| Totals..... | 472,500 men | (78,000 cavalry, 2,084 guns). |

Sadowa ranks second in point of numbers, and Gravelotte (St. Privat), 1870, third.

Prussian armies broke up from their bivouacs in the darkness hours before the dawn, and began a dreary night-march through cold and rain, and though it was midsummer the weather was miserably depressing. There was no sight of the sunrise, for the sky was thick with gray clouds that sent down frequent showers, and a rainy mist hung along the hollow of the Bistritz till long after dawn.

The first troops to come in contact with the enemy were the vanguard of the 1st Army. As the twilight grew to day the Austrian outposts along the Bistritz saw through the driving rain mounted vedettes of the enemy crowning the hilltops that looked down on the line of the river. For some hours this was all they saw. But behind the low hills the troops of the 1st Army were massing for the attack. On both sides of the roads as the columns approached the hills the troops were moved out into the fields —masses of greatcoated infantry, battery after battery, with the guns and the teams splashed with mud. The rain had soaked the standing corn, and the troops and their horses trampled it down; but the tangled mass of vegetation was a drag on the gun wheels as they pulled slowly through it. By sunrise Frederick Charles and his staff were waiting just behind the flat summit of the hill near the village of Dub, a point that, if the weather cleared, would command a good view of the Austrian positions. Here he was soon joined by Von Moltke and the headquarters staff, and the two leaders chatted together. The plan of the battle had been

already settled, and there was nothing to do but to await reports that the troops were up to the front and ready to advance. Prince Frederick Charles, with the 1st Army, was to drive in the enemy's posts on the Bistritz, cross the river, and keep the Austrian centre occupied. Meanwhile Herwarth, with the Elbe Army, was to move forward on the right and force back and turn Benedek's left; while the Crown Prince, with the 2nd Army, was to come down from the northward, strike in behind the enemy's right, and threaten to cut the Austrians off from the crossings of the Elbe. This attack by the Crown Prince was intended to be the decisive move of the day.

Strange to say, Benedek did not expect any serious attempt to be made against him on that side. His information was very misleading, and he thought that the bulk of the Crown Prince's army had already moved westward and joined the 1st Army, and that he had all, or nearly all, the Prussian army in his front. He did not anticipate that anything more than a relatively small detachment had been left to the northward on his right flank. This error was largely the result of his keeping his splendid cavalry waiting for use in charges on the battlefield, instead of using them to guard his flanks. Had he sent them out to the northward, he would not only have discovered the presence of a great army in that direction, but would also have been able to use his cavalry and horse artillery to delay very seriously the Crown Prince's advance.

About seven o'clock a carriage, escorted by a considerable body of horsemen, drove along the road from Gitschin to the rendezvous behind the hill of Dub. King William was coming to assume formal command of the battle. He mounted his horse, and rode up to Moltke and the "Red Prince." With him came Bismarck, wearing for the occasion his white uniform of a major of Cuirassiers. There were a crowd of staff officers and gallopers, and a group of correspondents of various newspapers, for the "war correspondent" had by this time won a recognized place with armies in the field. Russell of the *Times*, whom we have already seen at the Alma as a barely tolerated spectator of the fight, was beside Benedek on the hill of Chlum, an honoured guest of the Austrian staff.*

The king and his generals now moved up to the top of the hill, their station during the coming battle. A cold wind was blowing in gusts, and the rain was coming down in a steady drizzle. Through the murky atmosphere the hills held by the enemy

* I once talked over the Sadowa campaign with the late Sir William Russell. He told me it was the only time he had been with a beaten army. "During the retreat," he said, "I was hospitably entertained by some good people in a Bohemian village. They were in quite unnecessary fear of being plundered by the Prussians when they arrived in pursuit, and asked me if I could give them a letter to any friend in the invading army, asking him to use his influence to protect them. I told them the correspondent of my paper on the other side was a British officer, Colonel Hozier, and I left them a letter for him, which ran something like this:—'Dear Hozier, these people have been very kind to me. Don't let the Prussians steal their spoons.'"

loomed up like gray shadows. There was a better view of the villages clustering here and there along the marshy hollow of the Bistritz. The scouts had reported that the enemy held all these villages on both banks of the river, and held them in force. After a brief survey of the ground to the front, gallopers rode off to right and left and rear, conveying the orders for the first advance.

The road over the hill of Dub runs down the slope and across marshy meadows for about a mile and a half to the village of Sadowa, where it crosses the Bistritz by a bridge. The village of wooden houses is on the west bank, with orchards along the river, and a little to the south of it was a brick-built sugar factory with a tall chimney. The first operation of the day was to be the seizure of the village and bridge. Over the hilltop came some batteries of artillery, escorted by a regiment of Uhlans, with their rain-soaked pennons hanging heavily round their lances. As the guns pulled out into the fields and wheeled into position, the horses were slipping and almost falling on the sodden ground. Before they had unlimbered there came the opening shots of the battle from the other side. A flash through the driving rain, a cloud of smoke in a field beyond the Bistritz to the north of Sadowa, and a shell came hurtling in among the Uhlans, burst as it struck the ground, sent up a geyser of mud, smoke, and flame, and emptied four saddles.

Battery after battery now opened along the river, and from the hills on its west bank the Prus-

sians answered back as their guns came into position. The smoke hung heavy in the damp air, and at times the batteries had to suspend their fire to get a better view of their targets before reopening. The Prussian guns were shelling the villages along the river, and soon there was grim proof that their fire was effective. Black smoke began to rise from the houses, and then through the smoke-clouds there shot up red tongues of flame. Sadowa and two more villages to the south of it were ablaze. The unfortunate peasants were witnessing the swift destruction of their homes.

While the batteries were thus doing their deadly work, the infantry were forming for the attack of the river line.

But the infantry in the centre could not advance till something had been done to reduce the fire effect of the Austrian batteries. Benedek's artillery served him well, and made a splendid fight. To help the gunners, ranges had been carefully measured off by the Austrians, and trees felled at intervals served to mark the distances from the artillery positions; and there was a double range of batteries in action—some along the low ground by the Bistritz, others on the slopes behind. There was serious loss among the Prussians. At one time several shells burst on the Dub hilltop, killing and wounding some of the king's escort. It was more than two hours before the fire of the Prussian guns began to tell. Then it was seen that some of the Austrian batteries were shifting their ground and withdrawing to longer ranges.

Even so, the infantry would not have advanced until further effect had been obtained and the enemy's infantry shaken; but the attack had to be somewhat anticipated, for towards the left Von Fransecky's Division had made a premature advance against the village of Benatek. The Austrians abandoned it after firing a few shots, and Von Fransecky occupied it; but his division was now in action with the enemy, who held the wooded slopes beyond the village, and this isolated division was across the Bistritz north of Sadowa unsupported, and in danger of being perhaps overwhelmed by a vigorous counter-attack. Prince Frederick Charles therefore, about ten o'clock, ordered Stulpnagel to force the crossings of the Bistritz at Sadowa, Dohalicka, and Makrovous, three villages that had been blazing fiercely for the last hour.

Lines of skirmishers had already been pushed down the slopes towards the river. They now advanced and opened fire, and the company columns came on behind them. Over some two miles of front a hard-fought infantry battle now began. The Austrians held the orchards and enclosures along the river, and isolated buildings that had not been set on fire, and their artillery was in action on the farther bank. There was not much loss till the attack began to come to close quarters. Then the Prussians had to pay heavily for every yard of progress; but the more rapid fire of the breechloader gave them a decided advantage. Still, the Austrians fought so stubbornly around the burning villages that nearly an hour went

by before they were forced across the bridges, with the victors following them up closely.

The Prussian infantry and artillery now came pouring over the bridges, regardless of the fire of the enemy's batteries from the hills. All the higher slopes towards Lipa and Chlum were wrapped in the smoke of a long line of batteries. In the woods above Sadowa the Austrians made a stand to cover the retirement of the defenders of the Bistritz to the main position.

On the right the army of the Elbe had come into action. Herwarth's advanced guard had crossed the Bistritz at Nechanitz and driven the Saxon outposts from the fir and pine woods round Hradek. It was nearly eleven o'clock, but so far all that had been done was to force an advanced position which the Austrians had never intended to hold for long. The main position had now to be assailed. For this the co-operation of the Crown Prince and the 2nd Army would be of vital importance.

In a campaign of the present day two armies operating in concert within a few miles of each other would be in constant communication by telegraph. If in any enemy's country there was any difficulty in keeping a line of wires and cables intact, some form of wireless telegraphy would be used. But at Sadowa there was no telegraphic link between the headquarters of the 1st and 2nd Army, and the king and Moltke were not aware that the Crown Prince's troops were in action till long after their appearance on the field.

The sudden change in the orders in the late hours of the previous evening had somewhat delayed the start of the Crown Prince's columns. To convey new orders during the night to troops in bivouacs and cantonments extending over many miles of country is a lengthy process. The method followed would have to be something like this:—On Moltke's orders reaching the Crown Prince, he would, with his chief of the staff, draw up the special orders for each corps or division. These would be duplicated and sent off by mounted officers to the subordinate generals. They would then have to add any special orders for their own detachments; these orders would be dictated to the staff clerks, so as to secure a sufficient number of copies, and then staff officers and orderlies would ride with them to the commanders of the units concerned. Every officer would already have received a set of orders, which the new orders would cancel, and with each detachment fresh arrangements would have to be hurriedly made for the morning's work. All this meant delay. Nevertheless, the columns of the 2nd Army were in movement southwards before sunrise, a division on their left being entrusted with the task of masking and observing the fortress of Josefstadt.

Benedek received early in the day a message from Josefstadt, warning him that hostile troops had been seen marching past the place on the west side of the Elbe. But he still clung to his theory that the Crown Prince was with Frederick Charles in his front, and did not regard the presence of what he took to be

a minor detachment on his right as a very serious menace. His orders for the day show that he expected the flank attack to be made against his left, where he had stationed the Saxon Army Corps. He contented himself with placing a brigade of infantry on his right rear to watch the crossings of the lower course of the little river Trotina from the village of Racitz to its confluence with the Elbe. About half-past nine the weather had somewhat cleared, and the Crown Prince, who was with his advanced guard, saw heavy clouds of cannon smoke on the hills about the village of Horenowes and on the lower slopes towards Benatek. The wind was blowing from the northward, and though there was evidently a serious artillery fight in progress a few miles to the front, not a sound of it could be heard. The march of the right column, headed by the Prussian Guards, was directed towards Horenowes; the left column moving so as to strike in between the heights and the Elbe. The word was passed to prepare for action, and the official account of the battle tells how the colours were shaken out, and the chaplains, Catholic and Protestant, rode down the lines exhorting the men to do their duty. Towards eleven o'clock the advanced guard of the left column was in action with Austrian outposts along the Trotina. By this time the 1st Army was beginning its attack on the Austrian main position after forcing the line of the Bistritz, but still had no idea that the Crown Prince's army was already coming into action.

For more than two hours the 1st Army made

hardly any progress. On the right and in the centre Fransecky and Stulpnagel's men were fighting hard to force their way through the Maslowed and Sadowa woods. From the heights in the Austrian centre a line of entrenched guns fired with deadly effect on the Prussian batteries along the Bistritz. Some of the batteries on the side of the attack barely held their ground, losing heavily in men and horses. Even some guns were dismounted by bursting shells shattering the gun wheels. On the right, for some time Herwarth's batteries could only support the attack of the Elbe Army at long range from the west bank of the Bistritz. The Austrians had partly destroyed the bridge at Nechanitz, and though the infantry could cross it, it was nearly two hours before the pioneers could repair it sufficiently to make it passable by artillery. Very slowly, and at the cost of some hand-to-hand fighting with the bayonet, the Sadowa wood was won.

So far Moltke had good reason to be satisfied with the progress obtained, for his whole plan for the battle depended on keeping the enemy occupied until the Crown Prince could strike in on his right rear. But there was no sign to be seen of the 2nd Army being in action, and there was a growing danger that if its co-operation failed Benedek might make a counter-attack, and drive the sorely-tried 1st Army into the marshes of the Bistritz. The king was becoming anxious and impatient, and towards one o'clock actually gave orders for a massed attack of infantry against the Austrian entrenched battery

in front of Chlum and Lipa. Moltke persuaded him to withdraw the order, telling him frankly that the attack must fail, and fail with terrible loss of life. More than this, its failure would give an opening for a general counter-attack by the enemy. He insisted that before trying any desperate measures they must wait a little longer for the promised intervention of the Crown Prince and his 100,000 fighting men.

Bismarck, sitting on horseback beside the king, was continually scanning the hills to the north-eastward with his field-glass, hoping to see some sign that the Austrians were being attacked in that direction. At one time it was noticed that some of the enemy's guns on the hillside near Chlum were no longer firing towards the Bistritz, but there pointing northward. Could they be in action with the Crown Prince's batteries? Moltke looked at them through his field-glass, and explained that they were apparently firing at the right of Fransecky's attack on Maslowed. Smoking is a way to calm or disguise anxiety, and Bismarck took out his cigar-case, and before lighting a cigar himself, offered one to Von Moltke. Instead of taking the first that offered, Moltke looked carefully at the cigars and picked out the best. Bismarck said afterwards that the trifling incident reassured him, for he thought that if the veteran chief of the staff could take so much care in picking out a good cigar, he could not be very anxious about more serious matters.

Anxious as the headquarters staff undoubtedly were, there was no real reason for their anxiety;

for, all unknown to them, the Crown Prince's army had been already in action for a good two hours, and was making steady progress. As early as eleven o'clock he had actually sent two staff officers with information as to his position and plans to Fransecky; but, strange to say, that general was so fully occupied with his own operations against the Austrian right about Maslowed and Horenowes, that he did not send on the news to the king and Von Moltke. The thunder of the nearer cannonade prevented the sound of the Crown Prince's guns being heard in the Prussian centre. The thick rainy weather prevented the rising smoke being seen, and the whole attack was hidden from view by the line of hills held by Benedek's army.

The first sign of the Crown Prince's advance telling upon the enemy came from the Prussian left. For five hours, from shortly after 9 till after 2 p.m., the Austrians had made a desperate defence of the Maslowed woods against Fransecky's equally determined attack. In this fight the Prussian infantry lost 84 officers and some 2,000 men. It was only after a severe struggle that the margin of the wood was forced; then there was a long series of sharp conflicts in its interior, the fight swaying backwards and forwards in the dense undergrowth, and all order being lost. "After a series of alternate successes and reverses," says the Prussian official narrative, "the regiments, battalions, and companies which were engaged in the interior of the wood had in the end become completely mixed up; they could barely

see a yard in front of them. It was thus impossible to control the fight as a whole, and the leaders could do no more than personally set an example to their men. Everywhere officers gathered about them such men as were within sight and hearing, irrespective of what regiments they belonged to, and led them again into the fight. The troops which were driven out of the wood were sent into it again, and reserves were formed out of those who were completely disorganized. In the rear of the fighting line Austrian prisoners were continually being brought in, but there was also an ever-increasing stream of wounded and of leaderless men."

But towards two o'clock the resistance of the Austrians became less stubborn, and then it was found that they were abandoning the wood. More than this, it was seen that the Austrian right was falling back from the heights above Horenowes and Maslowed. Some batteries which had been in action on a bold hill near Horenowes, marked by a pair of tall trees, limbered up and disappeared down its eastern slope. Evidently something serious was happening beyond the enemy's right flank. It must be that the Crown Prince's attack was being pushed home. Along the Prussian centre to Herwarth on the extreme right the word ran, " The Crown Prince is coming ! " and anxiety gave way to expectation of a speedy triumph.

The Crown Prince was not merely coming ; he had come. On his right, nearest to Fransecky's attack, he had pushed the Guards forward against Horenowes.

A single battery was in action on the tree-topped hill as the regiments of the Guards advanced across the marshy valley to the north of it. The Austrians hurried up several batteries to support it, and the artillery of the Prussian Guards unlimbered and replied to their fire. On the left, the Crown Prince's advance was forcing back the Austrian detachments from the banks of the Trotina and enveloping the village of Racitz. Just as these attacks developed, Benedek had been preparing to make a fierce counter-attack on the Prussian centre. He had ridden down the eastern slope of Chlum Hill to bring up the reserves who were waiting there. As he appeared among them the bands struck up the Austrian National Anthem, Haydn's "God preserve the Emperor Francis," and the men cheered wildly. "Leave the cheering till to-morrow, my boys," said Benedek as he rode through the ranks, meaning that it was better to wait till victory was won. He was about to move the reserves to the front, when reports reached him that the attack to the northward was that of a great army. He gave up for the present all idea of assuming the offensive, sent some reinforcements to support the weak line that held the Trotina River, and ordered the 4th Corps on the right, which was opposing Fransecky, to swing back and face northward.

It was this retirement that gave the Prussian headquarters staff the first clear proof that the Crown Prince was pushing in upon the Austrian right. Crushed by the fire of the numerous batteries of the Guards, the Austrian artillery abandoned the un-

equal fight for the Horenowes Hill, limbered up, and withdrew. The Guards pushed forward and won the hill with trifling loss. The 21st Brigade stormed Racitz, and the Austrians fell back from the line of the little river that runs past it.

The Crown Prince's 100,000 men had now at most one-fourth of their numbers directly opposed to them, and had only to move boldly onward to push the enemy back. Across the right front of the Prussian advance the Austrian 4th Corps was retiring in column, its rearguard pressed by Fransecky's exultant troops. The whole of the Austrian right was disorganized and moving to new positions, with a sense of being hustled on its way by the overwhelmingly superior numbers of the attack. The Guards advanced into Horenowes village, and engaged and drove in some Austrian battalions who rallied on the hill to the south-east of it. The Crown Prince's left columns were pouring across the Trotina, threatening the enemy's line of retreat. Along the front towards the Bistritz the Prussian fire redoubled. New regiments were sent into the fighting line, and on the Austrian left Herwarth at last drove out the defenders of the Hradek woods, and began to develop his attack against the main position of the Saxons on the hills about Problus and Prim. The news of the Crown Prince's victorious advance had sent a new impulse through the whole of the attack. After a weary and doubtful struggle the Prussians had at last the feeling of success being within their grasp.

The Crown Prince now drove the Guard Corps like

a wedge into the centre of the Austrian position. While the 2nd Division of the Guards swept the enemy out of Maslowed and cleared the low hills to the east of it, the 1st Division pushed steadily southwards. In front of it rose the hill of Chlum, with the village clustering round the square-towered church on its summit, the highest point in the range of hills held by the enemy. The rapid, almost unopposed advance of the Guards had come as a surprise to Benedek. Chlum was very weakly held. The defenders of the hill had been moved down to its western slope, where, with the line of entrenched batteries stretching along the hillside towards Lipa village, they were engaged in repelling the attack directed against them by Prince Frederick Charles from the Sadowa woods. Suddenly a storm of artillery fire burst out upon them on their right flank, and in a massive column the Prussian Guards came charging into Chlum village. It was taken after the briefest of struggles. At a quarter to three the Prussian colours were waving from its church tower.

General Hiller von Gärtringen, the commander of the 1st Guards Division, had won a splendid success, but it had placed him for the moment in a position of considerable danger, isolated at the head of a few battalions in the very heart of the enemy's position. When Benedek heard that the Prussians were in Chlum he was west of the village near Lipa, watching his line of entrenched batteries shelling the Prussian advance from the edge of the Sadowa wood. He absolutely refused to believe the news,

and rode with his staff towards Chlum, only to be met by a heavy rifle fire as he approached the place. He turned and rode by the Königgrätz road towards the village of Rosberitz, intending to organize a counter-attack from that side and retake Chlum. But as Rosberitz came in sight over the shoulder of the hill, helmeted infantry showed themselves at the entrance of the village, and sent a volley at the Austrian staff. Hiller, with splendid dash and enterprise, had decided that the best way to make good his position in the Austrian centre was to continue attacking. He had hurried up some batteries into Chlum, and at the head of three battalions of his Guardsmen rushed Rosberitz. While he was carrying the village by storm, just fifteen minutes after the capture of Chlum, the latter place was assailed by Austrian infantry coming up from the Lipa wood; but the Prussians drove them back with the rapid fire of their breech-loading rifles. Wherever infantry met infantry at short ranges, the superiority of the needle-gun to the old Austrian muzzle-loader soon decided the contest, and always with heavy loss to the white coats.

Benedek now made strenuous efforts to turn the adverse tide of battle. On the western slopes of the hills the long lines of entrenched batteries for a while successfully checked the advance of Frederick Charles's battalions from the Bistritz. Southward the Saxons fought stubbornly, and delayed for a considerable time the dangerous movement of the Elbe Army against the Austrian left. The right was fall-

ing back before the advance of the Crown Prince between the hills and the Elbe. Here some of the Austrian regiments showed very little inclination to continue the fight. A great column of the 2nd Corps marched towards the Elbe almost without firing a shot. But Benedek's personal efforts were directed in the first instance to expelling Hiller's Guardsmen from the Chlum heights. He hurried 100 guns into position in a mile-long line between Langenhof and Wsestaar, and bombarded Chlum and Rosberitz. On the left of the guns he brought up his reserve, the 6th Corps, and three divisions of cavalry. Then he hurled a mass of infantry upon Rosberitz. The fire of the Prussian needle-gun mowed them down, but on they went, and by sheer reckless disregard of loss forced their way into the village, and drove the Prussian Guardsmen out at the bayonet's point. But they could not advance farther. Hiller held on to Chlum, where he was steadily reinforced. A storm of shells rained upon the lofty hilltop. One of these burst close to Hiller and struck him dead shortly after the recapture of Rosberitz. Von Grossman, his second in command, took over the direction of the fight and prepared for a fresh advance.

It was directed against Langenhof. The village was stormed, the long line of Austrian guns was taken in flank, and the nearest ten of them captured by shooting down the horses and drivers as they tried to limber up and retire. Then Rosberitz was stormed by an attack of a strong firing line supported by massed columns, which swept down on the front and flanks

of the place, and almost enveloped it, taking 3,000 prisoners. To the south-east of Rosberitz, almost at the same moment, a Prussian brigade fought its way into the village of Sweti. In the centre, towards the Bistritz, Frederick Charles's infantry was storming the entrenched batteries. They took scores of guns, for the cannon were left in the earthworks with no teams available to remove them. Indeed, the Austrian artillery officers had no intention of withdrawing them; they had decided to sacrifice their guns by remaining in action to the last moment, in order to hold back as long as possible the advance of the Prussian centre to the heights. On the southern flank of the battle the Saxons were now giving way before Herwarth's attack, and the village of Problus was in the hands of the Prussians.

It was about five o'clock. The heights had been lost, and the Austrian line of retreat to Königgrätz was in serious danger. The Crown Prince had ridden through Chlum, and as he left the village saw his cousin Prince Frederick Charles leading an infantry column up the road from Lipa. The two princes saluted each other with a wave of their caps, but both were too busy to meet and exchange congratulations.

Over the heights beyond Langenhof came a body of Prussian cavalry. At its head rode the old king, with Moltke and Bismarck beside him. They saw below them on the slopes towards the Elbe a great multitude of white uniformed infantry rolling back like an ebbing tide towards the bridges of the Elbe.

Here the retiring Austrians were moving in a confused mass; there they kept together in ordered columns. But the retreat was covered by firing lines of infantry, and several batteries of artillery were still in action. Masses of cavalry were moving out to check any attempt at pursuit—splendid squadrons of tall cuirassiers, brilliantly uniformed Hungarian hussars, and the forest of pennoned lances of the Polish Uhlans. The retiring mass of the enemy was half ringed round with a crescent of hostile fire stretching for miles. Battery after battery rushed to the summit of the conquered ridges, and sent its shells screaming into the huge target presented by the defeated army. Firing lines pressed forward to pour into nearest Austrians the rapid volleys of the needle-gun.

The Austrian shells burst among the king's escort. A score of men and horses fell killed and wounded. The king was excited, eager to lead in person a charge upon the enemy. Bismarck caught his bridle, and told him he must not expose himself uselessly. It was with difficulty that the Chancellor could persuade him to be a spectator of the closing scenes of the fight.

Had the Prussian cavalry been assembled in a great mass and sent round the right of the Elbe Army, it might have cut the Austrians off from Königgrätz and made Sadowa a Sedan. But the cavalry of the victors was used in piecemeal fashion, charging here and there in small detachments, sometimes a single regiment being thus employed. The Austrian

cavalry fought splendidly, and more than once rode over the Prussian squadrons, but always failed disastrously when it charged against the advancing lines of infantry, men and horses falling in heaps under the blasts of rifle fire. Two men of British race distinguished themselves in these desperate charges that saved the Austrian army from utter destruction. One was an Englishman, Colonel Beales of the Cuirassiers, who was badly wounded at the head of his regiment. The other was a Scot, Count Stuart d'Albanie, major of Austrian Dragoons, who won his colonel's commission at Sadowa. He claimed to be a descendant of the royal house of Stuart.

The Crown Prince had pushed forward from Chlum through Rosberitz at the head of the victorious Guards, who were now to help in completing the victory. Good soldier as he was, he was painfully impressed by the horrors he witnessed. He wrote that night in his carefully-kept diary:—"Around us lay or hobbled about many of the well-known figures of the Berlin and Potsdam garrisons.* A shocking appearance was presented by those who were using their rifles as crutches, or who were being led up the heights by unwounded comrades. The most horrid spectacle was that of an Austrian battery, of which all the men and horses had been shot down. It is an awful thing to ride over a battlefield, and it is impossible to describe the hideous mutilations that present themselves. War is really something fright-

* These are the peace garrisons of the Prussian Guards.

ful, and those who, sitting at a green baize table, bring it about with a stroke of a pen, little dream of the horrors they are conjuring up. In Rosberitz, where, judging from the heaps of dead and wounded, the fighting must have been terribly fierce, I found my kinsman Prince Antony of Hohenzollern mortally wounded."

As he rode forward the Crown Prince met the king, and father and son embraced each other amid the frantic cheers of the Guardsmen. The king told him how delighted he was that he had proved his worth as a leader of armies, and took from his own coat and pinned on his son's breast the Order of Merit, the most prized of Prussian decorations.

The slaughter of the day was now nearly over. The Austrians were crossing the bridges under the protection of the guns of Königgrätz and of the strong rearguards of cavalry and artillery that Benedek had organized. Old General Steinmetz, a veteran who had fought against the first Napoleon, was just on the point of launching a last attack along the bank of the Elbe, in the hope of securing some thousands of prisoners and some scores of guns, when he received an order from Moltke bidding him cease fire and halt everywhere. No attempt was to be made to press the beaten enemy further, and next day was to be a day of rest for the army.

Thanks to the new Red Cross organization, the battlefield, extensive as it was, was cleared of the wounded of both sides by sunrise next day. In proportion to the numbers engaged the losses of the

victors were not serious. In the great battles of the Napoleonic period the loss was rarely less than ten per cent., and often much higher. At Sadowa the Prussian loss was only about four per cent., but the numbers engaged made even this small percentage represent a terrible total; 360 officers and more than 8,500 men were killed or wounded. The heaviest loss fell on Fransecky's Corps, which lost more than 2,000 men.

The Austrian losses were fearful.* This was largely the result of the execution done in the closely-formed Austrian ranks by the Prussian breechloader. The dead and wounded of the defeated Allies reached the

* Otto Berndt (*Die Zahl im Kriege*) gives the following analysis of the losses at Sadowa :—

| | Prussians. | | Austrians. | | Saxons. | | Austrians and Saxons. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Officers. | Men. | Officers. | Men. | Officers. | Men. | Officers. | Men. |
| Killed | 100 | 1,835 | 330 | 5,328 | 15 | 120 | 345 | 5,448 |
| Wounded | 260 | 6,699 | 431 | 7,143 | 40 | 900 | 471 | 8,043 |
| Wounded prisoners | .. | .. | 307 | 8,984 | .. | .. | 307 | 8,984 |
| Unwounded prisoners | .. | .. | 202 | 12,677 | .. | .. | 202 | 12,677 |
| Missing | .. | 278 | 43 | 7,367 | .. | 426 | 43 | 7,793 |
| | 360 | 8,812 | 1,313 | 41,499 | 55 | 1,446 | 1,368 | 42,945 |
| Totals | 9,172 | | 42,812 | | 1,501 | | 44,313 | |

The "missing" on the Prussian side were chiefly a few prisoners taken by the Austrians. The "missing" of the Allies were a large number of disbanded men who had not rejoined when the lists were made up, and probably a number of men killed in the woods and not found at once, and a few drowned at the crossing of the Elbe during the night.

awful total of 23,598 men (11 per cent.). The missing and the unwounded prisoners numbered more than 20,000, making Benedek's total loss more than 44,000. Eleven generals and more than 1,300 officers were included in these losses. Some of the cavalry units suffered heavily in the last stage of the fight. The 3rd Cavalry Division lost more than one-fifth of its strength (43 officers, 665 men, and 901 horses). The slaughter of artillery teams was heavy: about 6,000 horses were killed or so badly wounded at to make them useless. No less than 187 guns were captured by the victors.

The war did not end at once, but this overwhelming victory decided its result. Austria ceded Venetia to Italy, and withdrew from the Germanic Confederation; and Prussia became the head of a united Germany—the prelude to the foundation of a new German Empire, after a still greater war, in which Saxony, Bavaria, and other minor states fought side by side with the Prussians, whom they had met in battle in 1866, and helped largely to carry the German banners to victory.

## CHAPTER VI.

### REZONVILLE AND GRAVELOTTE.

*August* 16 *and* 18, 1870.

PARIS had gone half mad with the war fever. The regiments marching from their barracks to entrain for the frontier were cheered by excited crowds yelling, "À Berlin! à Berlin!" The Prime Minister had declared that he went to war with a light heart. Marshal Lebœuf had assured the emperor that his army was "ready down to the last gaiter button." Those Prussians had scored in 1866 because they had a breech-loading rifle against slow-firing, old-fashioned muzzle-loaders. But now the French had the wonderful Chassepot, with a longer range than the Prussian needle-gun. And there was the mitrailleuse, a secret weapon, sent out from the arsenals covered up with oil-cloths lest some spy might discover its mechanism. Two men could work it and spurt out rifle bullets in death-dealing showers. So France was up to date, more than up to date, in the weapons of its army, and, better still, it was an army of veterans, of professional soldiers, the victors of the Crimea, Italy, Algeria. Compared with them

the short-service soldiers of Prussia, with their crowds of reservists hurried up from desk and counter, were only a militia. They would soon be hustled across the Rhine with French bayonets at their backs. So the departing soldiers chalked "To Berlin" on the doors of the railway carriages.

South Germany, which had fought Prussia four years ago, would, it was hoped, at least stand neutral. Austria would seize the occasion to avenge Sadowa. Italy would be once more the ally of Napoleon III. in gratitude for Magenta and Solferino. There would be another Jena. Bismarck and his king would be taught a lesson.

Napoleon III. was to command in person the armies gathering to win back the old Rhine frontier. His son, the boy Prince Imperial, would go with him to learn the soldier's business in the field. Marshal MacMahon with the veterans of Algeria would be on the right, Marshal Bazaine on the left. Marshal Canrobert of Crimean and Italian fame would command another corps. Then there were the generals who would soon win the marshal's baton—Frossard the engineer, a scientific soldier, it was said, equal to the best; Ducrot and Bourbaki of the Imperial Guard, good fighting men, with all the dash of the French soldier in them; and L'Admirault, calm, self-possessed, a man to count on in a difficult place. Their names would soon be linked with new victories.

These were the hopes of France in the middle of July 1870. It was disappointing that two weeks should go by with no news except of insignificant

skirmishes between cavalry patrols. "We ought to be across the Rhine by now," said the strategists of the Paris cafés. It was not encouraging to hear that the South German States had all declared that they would stand by Prussia. Austria was not moving. Italy seemed to be thinking only of seizing Rome. But no matter. The French army would soon move, and did not need allies. Those South Germans would find they had made a mistake.

But at Metz, in the Hôtel de l'Europe, now the headquarters of Napoleon III., there were anxious faces at the tables in the long mirror-decorated dining-room in the evenings, and anxious discussions in the emperor's study during the last days of July. Not half the expected numbers were as yet concentrated in the border departments. The regimental depots were sending in the reservists in pitiful handfuls of men, mostly half equipped. The supply department was in hopeless confusion. Generals were telegraphing that they were waiting for wheeled transport, horses, camp equipment; that they were short of men, and the men they had could not be moved. The projected dash across the Rhine had to be put off from day to day, and it was almost impossible to obtain news of how far the enemy's preparations had advanced, and where he was concentrating.

All the while the mobilization of the German armies was proceeding with the smoothness of a well-oiled machine. Three great masses of armed men were

assembling on the Rhine. Von Moltke, chief of the Prussian staff, had arranged everything for an advance across the French frontier in the first days of August. He would have the advantage of numbers, and the still greater advantage of a definite plan opposed to the daily changing counsels of the perplexed Imperial headquarters.

On August 2nd, in order to do something to allay the impatience of the French people, a division drove in the Prussian detachment at Sarrebruck. The affair was represented as a great victory. But the German tide of invasion was now pouring towards the frontier. On August 4th Abel Douay's isolated division was crushed at Weissemburg after a heroic struggle against overwhelming odds. On the fatal Saturday, August 6th, there were two French defeats—Frossard beaten on the left at Forbach, and MacMahon and his splendid Algerian regiments driven from the hills of Woerth on the right. "All may yet be regained," said the emperor in the telegram that told of this double disaster. The very phrase was an admission that much had been already lost.

MacMahon's army retreated across the Vosges, without attempting to hold the passes, without even destroying bridges and tunnels. The German left, the 3rd Army, under the Crown Prince, afterwards the Emperor Frederick, followed it up towards Châlons, the Aldershot of imperial France, where a reserve army was forming. The corps on the French left fell back towards Metz, followed, at first very slowly, by the two other German armies.

These were the "1st Army," * on the right, under the veteran Steinmetz, who as a young officer had fought against the great Napoleon in the Leipzig campaign and marched into France with Blücher in 1814; and the "2nd Army," under King William's nephew, Prince Frederick Charles of Hohenzollern, whom the soldiers called the "Red Prince," from his fondness for wearing the red jacket of the famous Ziethen Hussars. The aged King William was in personal command of these two armies, with Von Moltke once more acting as his chief of the staff.

For a few hours the French thought of making a stand east of Metz, along the banks of the little river Nied. The only result was the loss of valuable time. Then a new plan was adopted. The emperor, disappointed, harassed with the painful malady that finally ended his days, decided on handing over the command of the "Army of the Rhine" to Marshal Bazaine and proceeding himself to Châlons. Bazaine was to lead the army back through Metz, leave a sufficient garrison to hold the fortress, and then retreat on Châlons by way of Verdun. At Châlons he would join what was left of MacMahon's army and the reserve army gathering there, and these united forces would then face the advancing Germans and fight a great battle to bar the way to Paris.

Bazaine blundered from the first. No use was

* The 1st Army was made up of the men of the Rhineland and Westphalia; the 2nd Army, of those of Central and North Germany and Saxony; the 3rd Army, of those of Silesia and the South German States.

made of the French cavalry to watch the movements of the enemy, whose daring horsemen were able to report to Von Moltke every movement of the French. When every day and hour was important the retirement through Metz was hopelessly slow. On August 14th, when part of Bazaine's army was across the Moselle at Metz, and the orders were for the rest of it to pass the river immediately, the eagerness of a German divisional general and the lack of a strong command on the French side brought on a battle which, so far as the development of Bazaine's plan went, was simply a waste of life. When the Germans opened fire that afternoon against the 3rd French Corps, already forming to retire, General Decaen, who commanded, should have merely left a rearguard in position till he withdrew under the protection of the outlying forts of Metz. Instead of this he accepted the challenge. L'Admirault, when he heard the firing, came back from the bridges with the 4th Corps and joined in the fight. The march of the Imperial Guard was stopped. Bazaine, who rode up, neither put an end to the useless fight nor took advantage of the superior numbers at his command to crush the enemy's vanguard. When darkness ended the fighting, the French had held their ground, and at one point driven back the enemy. They claim the action of the 14th as a victory, the "battle of Borny." The Germans call it the "battle of Colombey," and also claim it as a success, because they attained their object in delaying the French retreat. The losses were heavy on both sides. Decaen was

mortally wounded, and Bazaine himself hit in the shoulder by a shell splinter, the sixth wound he had received in action during his long career, in which he had fought his way upward from private to field-marshal.

The whole army ought to have been across the Moselle by midnight on the 14th. The result of the delay was that all night the columns were moving through the streets of Metz and across the bridges. By a hopeless piece of blundering, though there were four roads leading westward across the wide downs beyond the Moselle, the marshal had ordered every man, horse, gun, and wagon of his army, 150,000 strong, to follow a single road until the village of Gravelotte was reached. This meant endless confusion and delay. The huge column was so long that it took more than two days and nights to pass a given point. As they came up from the Moselle bridges, brigades and divisions, long lines of guns and wagons, and regiments of mounted men had to halt for hours to find a place on the crowded road that led up to the hills. All through the 15th and part of the night that followed, the moving multitude was plodding up the sloping road to the plateau of Gravelotte, while beside it thousands more snatched rest in improvised camps under the little shelter tents carried by the men. The emperor slept in a roadside inn near Gravelotte. Late in the evening Bazaine came to see him, and sat by his bed expressing his doubts as to whether he could direct the operations any longer after his wound at Borny. "It is nothing," said Napoleon. "You have won a victory. You have

broken the spell. Bring the army to Châlons, and all will yet be well."

On the 15th, while Steinmetz with the 1st German Army closed in on the east side of Metz and prepared to cross the Moselle, the cavalry of the 2nd Army (Frederick Charles) was across the river, with the heads of the infantry columns behind them on several roads. Bazaine had sent no orders to destroy the bridges above Metz, and subordinate French officers had not yet learned to act on their own initiative. The Germans were pleasantly surprised to find the bridges intact and even unwatched. Had they been destroyed there would have been a delay that might well have ensured the unmolested retreat of the French army; for the Germans had as yet no pontoon trains up to the front, and the Moselle, even unguarded, still more if watched by French cavalry and horse artillery, would have proved a serious obstacle.

Bazaine was already blundering badly. No one doubts that he was a man of splendid physical courage. He had proved it during more than thirty years of service, and as a brigadier, a divisional general, and a corps commander he had shown that he could be a vigorous leader. But it is a more serious matter to rise to the exigencies of the supreme command of a great army matched against an enterprising enemy with superior numbers on his side. Bazaine did not rise to the situation. With all the time that had already been lost, he was beginning to doubt whether he could reach Verdun and Châlons without having to fight a pitched battle against the united

armies of Steinmetz and the Red Prince. A leader like the first Napoleon would have beaten them in succession, boldly attacking the prince's army on the west bank of the Moselle before Steinmetz could come to its help, and then dealing with the 1st Army. But Bazaine was no Napoleon, and he even failed to take the chances the Germans presently gave him. The fact was that, although he seemed to accept the emperor's plan of a retirement on Châlons, he was already hesitating about facing the risks he saw in it, and was yielding to the attraction that a great fortress so often exercises on weak commanders. He had another plan in his mind of which so far he had said nothing, but which his actions presently revealed. He would keep the Army of the Rhine near Metz, under the protection of its outlying forts and supplied from its magazines, until the further advance of the invaders into France would give him an opportunity of resuming active operations. Military history shows again and again that an army that will not risk keeping the field, but trusts to the shelter of fortifications, is generally starved into surrender.

On the morning of Tuesday, August 16th, the French army resumed its movement of retreat, now in two columns—the one following the road that branches from Gravelotte by Rezonville and Mars-la-Tour; the other, the northern branch of the road that goes by Doncourt and Conflans. The ground which the French were traversing was part of the cretaceous plateau that extends from the Moselle towards the Meuse. The streams and little rivers

have cut it up with valleys and hollows, some of them so narrow as to suggest gorges and ravines. In places the crests of the plateau form bold ranges of hills, and there are numerous stretches of wood. The country would be like that of the Surrey downs, only that there is less pasture and more cultivation. Fences are few ; the highroads, bordered on each side by rows of poplars, are separated from the fields only by a small open ditch. The houses of the villages are compactly grouped together, with usually a walled cemetery round the church. Thus each village becomes easily a tactical point in the defence of the ground, with an open field of fire around it, and the walled churchyard for its improvised citadel. Here and there between the villages are massively built farmsteads, few, however, in number. On the high ground in hot summer weather little water is to be found, and during the operations round Metz not only did the wounded suffer intensely on account of the difficulty of obtaining water, but the troops halted on the heights had to send parties of men to the next valley to bring up water in buckets, camp kettles, and the like—a fatiguing operation after a march, and especially difficult when the column halted after dark.

The morning of the 16th was a fine summer day, with intense heat beginning almost as soon as the sun rose. Some of the corps commanders had their troops early on the move. The men had snatched an apology for breakfast from their haversacks, and hoping to be able to cook at the first long halt, they marched along the poplar avenues amidst clouds of white dust,

with the hot sun at their backs and not a vestige of shade. Bazaine rode over to the inn on the Gravelotte road where the emperor had passed the night to bid him farewell. He found Napoleon and the Prince Imperial already in their carriage, surrounded by an escort of Chasseurs d'Afrique, the dashing cavalry of the Algerian frontier. The emperor looked ill and depressed, but as he grasped the marshal's hand he told him they would soon meet at Châlons, and then do great things. He drove off by the northern road. Had he taken the southern he would probably have fallen into the hands of Rheinbaben's cavalry division, which was prowling beyond Mars-la-Tour some six miles away.

Outside the inn, country folk who had come in from the wooded and ravine-scarred hills along the Moselle by Gorze told the marshal that they had fled before great masses of Prussian troops, who had been pouring across the river for hours. In his orders issued the night before Bazaine had warned the 2nd and 6th Corps (Frossard and Canrobert), who were to follow the Mars-la-Tour road, that they had probably some 30,000 of the enemy south of them, and might be attacked. But he did not take the precaution of sending his cavalry out in this direction to gain touch with and delay the enemy, and he seemed now by no means anxious to hasten the march. He halted the troops he found near Gravelotte, and even told them they might set up their shelter tents and cook. From far away to the westward came the dull reports of a few cannon shots. Staff officers suggested that

the enemy was already attacking. "It's nothing," said Bazaine, as he turned to ride towards Rezonville. "It will be only a reconnaissance.

The shots were fired by a horse battery with Rheinbaben's cavaliers to the west of Rezonville. Their target was the head of the French column on the southern road. On the appearance of a mass of French cavalry the daring horsemen limbered up their guns and rode away to the southwards. In the dust and haze of the summer morning all they had made out was that a strong French column was approaching Mars-la-Tour from Rezonville. Though Rheinbaben had been in Mars-la-Tour since the day before, he had shown a strange lack of enterprise in scouting. With a very little trouble he might have found out that the whole French army was still crowded on the two roads of the plateau, and its retreat only begun. But he went away with the impression that what he had come upon was a strong rearguard, and that Bazaine's army was well on its way to Verdun. This, too, was the idea of General Alvensleben, who was marching up the forest-bordered road from Gorze towards Rezonville at the head of the Brandenburg Corps, the vanguard of Frederick Charles's army. He felt sure the French troops reported near Rezonville must be a last lagging detachment of the Army of the Rhine, and he decided to push on and attack them. There were no troops within miles to support him, and he was running an enormous risk.

German leadership in the Franco-Prussian war was by no means perfect. It seemed to be so admirable,

because on the whole it was good, and because that of the generals of the French army was abominably bad, except sometimes on the actual battlefield, where their soldier courage and the quality of their men enabled them to make a good fight. But even there an unfortunate theory of the best tactics for the quick-firing breech-loading rifle handicapped them throughout. The sound theory of Napoleon's days, which held its own still in the campaign of Magenta and Solferino, was that attack is the best form of defence, and the impetuous character of the French makes their attack formidable. Besides, it is only by attacking that an enemy can be really beaten. But with the coming of the breech-loading rifle there had come also a new doctrine that the way to win battles was to "sit tight" on a good position, preferably a line of high ground, and use the rapid fire to destroy the enemy as he attacked. "The defensive is now superior," was the teaching of the French military schools. The Germans held by the sounder doctrine, "Only the attack can give real results. It may be more costly than formerly, but the cost must be paid. To attack is to assert from the outset the sense of power and the determination to win."

For hours on this day of Rezonville the French had in their hands the opportunity of gaining a great victory—if only they would attack. But this wretched theory of the superiority of the defence made it the ruling idea that all they had to do was to cling to the edge of the high ground near the Mars-la-Tour-Gravelotte road and repel the Prussian attack. A

single German corps and some cavalry were opposed to all the Army of the Rhine. But the French did not attack. To move forward would have been to overwhelm Alvensleben, drive him back upon the troops strung out along the Gorze road, hustle them back upon the bridges of the Moselle, and (given the undoubted fighting quality of the French regulars) inflict a disaster on the German 2nd Army. Regimental officers, even soldiers in the French ranks, felt this instinctively; but Bazaine and the staff let the golden opportunity go by, and the rashness and the error of judgment of the German leaders thus became in the popular mind enterprise and clear-sighted daring. It is a true saying that he wins in war who makes the fewest mistakes—for mistakes there always are.

Alvensleben came on with the confidence inspired by his false view. He had no idea he was running into a hornet's nest, no foresight of the terrible price to be paid for his venture. It was about ten in the morning that his advanced guard, issuing from the Gorze woods, sighted Frossard's Corps marching across its front. Guns, cavalry, and wagons were on the Verdun road. The infantry was marching by field tracks and across open ground on the slopes between the poplar-bordered highway and the old Roman road north of it, the heads of the columns being partly hidden by the stretch of woods and copses that extends northwards from near Tronville. The Germans always had several batteries well to the front with their advanced guard, and these formed up and opened fire on the French. Frossard at once

replied, bringing his artillery promptly into action, while he formed his line of battle along the high ground of the plateau—his right in the woods, his left at Rezonville, throwing out a screen of skirmishers in the Tronville woods and along the Verdun road.

The positions of Bazaine's army corps at this moment were these. The 6th Corps (Canrobert) was moving north of Frossard's position, its leading division on the Roman road; the Imperial Guard was marching up through Gravelotte; two corps—the 3rd (Lebœuf) and the 4th (L'Admirault)—were marching by the road that branches off at Gravelotte and goes towards Verdun by Doncourt and Étain. Bazaine had thus his whole army well placed within easy reach of the scene of the opening battle. He might have rapidly concentrated to attack and overwhelm the enemy, if he had realized that only part of the German army was across the Moselle, and even that could only issue slowly from the defiles of the Gorze woods. Or he might have used Frossard's Corps and his cavalry to hold the Germans and steadily continued his movement on Verdun, with his flank thus protected. He chose a third course, in which the possible gain was the smallest. He fought a purely defensive battle, and showed throughout a continual anxiety for the safety of his left—massing troops there that would have been more useful elsewhere—under the delusion that the enemy would try to cut him off from Metz, while their whole object was to prevent him from getting away from it.

For the attack of the French positions Von Alvensleben had at hand the two divisions of the 3rd Corps —Stulpnagel's Division on the left and Buddenbrock's on the right. Rheinbaben's cavalry division was already on the ground. A considerable force of cavalry was within call, but the nearest infantry was still miles away, the army corps farthest forward towards the field being the 10th, under Vioghts-Rhetz, the Hanoverian Corps, some of whose regiments still bear on their colours the names of battles they helped to win under British generals. Alvensleben pressed the attack, sending his left forward to clear the Tronville woods, and hurling his right at the villages of Vionville and Flavigny. These were advanced posts of the French position; but Frossard's men made a stubborn fight for them, and in this first stage of the battle the loss was severe on both sides. It was only after more than one repulse, and at the end of two hours of hard fighting, that the Brandenburgers got into Vionville and Flavigny; and the left attack having won the south end of the woods, Alvensleben's men went forward to the line of the Verdun road.

He then realized that he had an overwhelmingly superior force in his front. Bazaine had ridden up from Gravelotte and taken the direction of the French defence. Canrobert's Corps was now in line along the high ground south of the Roman road. To its left, about Rezonville, the Imperial Guard, commanded by Bourbaki, had formed up, the picked soldiers of France, now going into action for the

first time since Solferino. The 2nd Corps (Frossard's) was withdrawn into the second line, and formed a reserve behind the Guard on the French right. Lebœuf's Corps was being brought up from the Doncourt road to support Canrobert.

The German advance came to a standstill. A line of skirmishers pushed out towards Rezonville was charged and scattered by a regiment of the cuirassiers of the Imperial Guard; but while they were disordered with their success they were in turn charged by one of Rheinbaben's brigades, made up of the Black Brunswickers and the 17th Hussars. They rode through the cuirassiers, and then the Brunswickers found themselves in front of one of the batteries of the Imperial Guard. They dashed at the guns, cutting down several of the gunners. On the flank of the battery was a group of mounted officers, among them one who wore the gold-braided kepi of a general. Some of the Brunswickers rode for him, and he defended himself sword in hand, showing that he was a good fighting man. But he and his staff officers were in imminent danger of death or capture when the 5th French Hussars came to the rescue and sent the Brunswickers back with many empty saddles. The general who had had such a narrow escape was no other than Marshal Bazaine himself. One of the best of the French critical historians of the war notes that it might have been a piece of good fortune for France if the 5th Hussars had not come so promptly to the rescue. If Bazaine had been killed or taken by the Black Brunswickers,

Marshal Canrobert would have succeeded by right of seniority to the command of the Army of the Rhine. This might well have meant a decided victory for France at Rezonville. In any case, it would have meant more vigorous and loyal leadership, and France would have perhaps been spared the misery of the blockade and capitulation of Metz.

Cavalry now began to play a great part in the battle. Alvensleben could not yet hope for infantry reinforcements, but the mounted troops were arriving. The 6th Cavalry Division, commanded by the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, had just arrived. They were flung into the fight, driving back the French Hussars, only to be charged by a mass of the cavalry of the Imperial Guard. In front of Rezonville there was a fierce mêlée of many squadrons, out of which emerged the red-coated Ziethen Hussars, riding in bold onset at the lines of bearskin-capped Guardsmen in front of the village. It was a hopeless piece of daring. With a storm of Chassepot bullets bringing down riders and horses, and the shells of a battery bursting in their midst, the Red Hussars turned when they were still 500 yards from the French line and rode back, leaving the ground strewn with dead and wounded. Their colonel had been one of the first to be shot dead.

Alvensleben had now all his men and guns in action, and no reserves to draw upon, and everywhere his advance had failed to win a single yard beyond the ground gained in the first attack. Lebœuf was reinforcing Canrobert, and the German general thought

he saw a disposition of the enemy to advance and turn his exposed left. He must keep the French right occupied for a while longer, to give Voights-Rhetz time to arrive with his sturdy Hanoverians. The only fresh troops he had available were those of Von Bredow's cavalry brigade, the 16th Lancers, and the 7th Magdeburg Cuirassiers.* Alvensleben ordered Von Bredow to charge the French batteries on the right and their infantry supports, telling him that the fate of the army depended on gaining some breathing time for the hard-pressed infantry. The two regiments together numbered only a little more than 600 sabres, and Von Bredow's charge is remembered in Germany as we in England remember the charge of the "Six Hundred" at Balaklava. It is known in the German army as the *Todtenritt*—the "Death-ride"—of Von Bredow.

The cuirassiers were first into the line of French guns. They came charging through the dense smoke of a battery, to the utter surprise of its gunners, who had not noticed its advance. Von Schmettow, the colonel of the regiment, cut down the battery commander. Every officer and man was ridden over or sabred, except one of the privates, who ran towards Von Schmettow calling out that he surrendered. The colonel saved his life and let him go. As the cuirassiers dashed on towards the French infantry this solitary gunner, crouching beside one of the guns

* This was Bismarck's regiment. He had the rank of major in it, and generally wore its uniform when with the royal staff during a campaign.

of the battery, watched the charge rolling away into the smoke of the rifle fight. The lancers had dashed through another battery, and were following up the cuirassiers, and together they went through the line of infantry, which broke before their onset. A French general who was directing the fire of the batteries tells how he got away by riding hard before the charge, and as he went he exclaimed to his adjutant, who was galloping beside him, "What a magnificent attack!"

In the rush through the batteries the German cavalry had suffered little, but in charging the infantry they lost heavily. Colonel von Schmettow had a narrow escape, two bullets going through his steel helmet. But now the cuirassiers and lancers were charged by two French cavalry brigades—those of Prince Murat, a grandson of the famous cavalry leader of Napoleon's days, and General Gramont. There was a fierce mêlée, in which French and Germans fought hand to hand. Lieutenant Campbell of Craignish, a young Scotch officer serving with the cuirassiers, cut down the standard-bearer of one of the French regiments and captured the eagle he carried, but he did not keep it long. The Frenchmen closed round him to recapture the flag; a pistol fired at close quarters shattered one of his hands, and he had to let his trophy go. He was with difficulty rescued by some of his men. Outnumbered as they were, the German horsemen kept together and fought their way out of the mêlée. Then they rode back through a storm of fire—rifles, machine-guns, cannon

opened on them—and only a handful reached the German lines. "They rode back—not the Six Hundred." Two-thirds of the officers and men strewed the 3,000 yards of ground over which they had charged. Only 104 of the cuirassiers and 90 of the lancers answered the roll-call.

It was now past two o'clock, and the Hanoverian Corps was beginning to arrive. Its appearance enabled Alvensleben to concentrate his hard-tried Brandenburgers on the right, and prolong his line to the left with the fresh troops. Then Prince Frederick Charles himself came on to the field to take over the command. He had ridden hard for fourteen miles from Gorze, and Archibald Forbes tells how he saw the "Red Prince" spurring towards Flavigny, keeping far in front of his staff and escort, and not even turning his head as a French shell burst beside him.

But the French were also being reinforced. L'Admirault's Corps was marching up from the Doncourt road and forming on the right. The Germans were still heavily outnumbered. Two things saved them from disaster. First, the vigour of Alvensleben's attack had led Bazaine to believe that they were in much greater force; and secondly, the attitude of passive defence adopted by the French army made its superiority in fighting strength useless, except to hold the ground on which the men stood. Frederick Charles recognized that the danger-point was on his exposed left, and he sent word to Voights-Rhetz to attack the French right. The attack was made

at half-past four, and was badly executed, with disastrous results for the Germans. It was directed against L'Admirault's Corps, which was prolonging the French line along the higher ground north of Mars-la-Tour, and had brought 60 guns and 12 mitrailleuses into action against the 36 guns on the German left. Masses of French infantry were on the heights, just out of sight behind the crest of the plateau, and a strong firing line had advanced down the slope. Probably Voights-Rhetz did not realize that he had nearly 12,000 French bayonets in his immediate front, for he sent forward a single brigade—five battalions, about 4,500 strong. As they advanced over perfectly open ground, there burst upon them such a storm of fire as the Germans had never yet experienced. It came from a double tier of infantry in line—the skirmishers on the lower ground, and the battalions formed up on the crest of the plateau. The advance soon came to a dead stop. Most of the officers were down, and the rank and file had lost seriously. For a while the brigade tried to hold its own with rifle fire, but from the crest masses of French infantry came rushing down, and deployed into swarms of skirmishers in the firing line, which advanced, firing as it came. The Hanoverians fell back, with the victorious French in close pursuit. The ground was heaped with fallen men, and for once the German soldiers had become thoroughly demoralized. Some were running, others threw themselves down and waited to be made prisoners. But we know from the narrative of a German officer, who was afterwards

one of the most famous of the military historians of the day (Captain Fritz Hoenig), that the French were also in a state of disorganization, and quite out of the hands of their officers. Hoenig had been wounded, and as he lay on the ground the advancing French line passed over him. He tells how they were shouting, "*Courage! En avant!*" and firing hurriedly from the hip, without bringing the rifle to the shoulder to aim. Many were stopping to secure and carry off wounded and unwounded prisoners. Some were even plundering the fallen men. It was the intervention of a French officer that saved Hoenig from having his watch taken. He thought that if there had been better discipline among the French not a man of the retiring brigade would have escaped.

Even as it was, the beaten remnant of the attack was in dire danger. Voights-Rhetz, to cover the retirement and check the pursuit, sent the 1st Dragoons of the Guard to charge the French. They swept round the east side of Mars-la-Tour, formed line of squadrons, passed through the wreck of the defeated infantry, and rode for the advancing skirmishers. The French halted and fired on them; but the dragoons, not without heavy loss, passed through them, doing, however, very little damage, and then went for the formed infantry behind them. They were met with a blast of fire from the front, and at the same time were fired on from the rear by the unbroken portions of the skirmish line, who turned to fire after them. Unable to close with the formed

infantry of the 4th Corps, the dragoons turned, charged once more through the skirmishers, and regained Mars-la-Tour, having lost in a few minutes 15 officers and 121 men and 250 horses. Most of the dismounted men were made prisoners. Two of the Chancellor von Bismarck's sons were serving as private soldiers in the dragoons, and rode in the charge. The elder, Count Herbert, was wounded; the younger, Count William, had his horse shot under him, and was badly hurt in the fall, but escaped capture.

The charge had served its purpose of disengaging the beaten brigade. The losses of its five battalions were very serious. Out of a total of 95 officers and about 4,400 men who went into the fight, 74 officers and 2,415 men did not return. Of these, two officers and 449 men were prisoners. The rest were killed or wounded. The brigade had lost nearly all its officers and more than half its men in less than half an hour. It was an awful revelation of the power of the modern rifle, even when used in the wild, half-trained way in which the French employed it. "I am not ashamed of owning," says Captain Hoenig, "that the French fire at Mars-la-Tour affected my nerves for months after the battle. Troops that have survived an ordeal of the kind are for a considerable time demoralized—men and officers alike—and I am not the only man who says this."

Now was the time for the French to use their superior numbers and the impulse of success—to throw L'Admirault's Corps upon the exposed German left. Even company officers and men in the ranks

felt it. As the dragoons disappeared behind Mars-la-Tour fire was reopened on the enemy's infantry, "who seemed few in numbers and very disorganized," says Colonel Patry, then serving as lieutenant of a French company. And he goes on to tell of the disappointment of the French at the want of enterprise of their leaders :—

"We asked each other why we were not led forward. We were strong in numbers and in the best of spirits ; we all felt, privates as well as officers, that there was next to nothing in front of us. Why not go forward ? Why not follow up the success already obtained ? Instead of this we were actually withdrawn to the main position. The whole thing was incomprehensible, and we swore at the generals who had no idea of making use of the advantages our dash had obtained for them." *

The wretched theory of purely defensive battles was the secret of this slackness of the French commanders. The Germans fully expected a fierce counter-attack on their left, and massed all their available cavalry to protect the exposed flank. The French cavalry leaders, more enterprising than their colleagues, saw the chance, and moved brigade after brigade to the right, and then boldly attacked the German cavalry. There was the most serious cavalry fighting of the whole war on the open ground near Mars-la-Tour. On both sides regiment after regiment was thrown into the mêlée, till at last some 80 squadrons—more than 5,000 men—were engaged. Those who looked on saw only a huge cloud of dust, out of which rose a wild din of shouting, clash of

* Patry, *La Guerre telle qu'elle est*, p. 87.

steel, and reports of pistol-shots. Out of the mêlée riderless horses came galloping back to the French and German lines, and wounded men struggled to reach a place of safety. Presently it was seen that more and more of the French cavaliers were riding back to the plateau, and then there was a general retirement, and the German horsemen were left in victorious possession of the ground.

Evening was now coming on, and the Germans made one more effort to advance against the French centre and left. The attack cost them much loss and gave no result. The men were too exhausted to accomplish anything serious. For some time after sunset there was desultory firing about Rezonville, but at last even this ended, and the two armies bivouacked on the ground on which they had fought since morning, with their outpost lines almost in touch with each other. All night long on the French right cavalry soldiers, French and German, came into the picket line, all of them dismounted and leading their horses, many of them wounded. They were the stragglers from the great cavalry mêlée.

At the close of the battle the French had on the field 113,000 men, including 14,000 cavalry, with 486 guns and 54 mitrailleuses. The Germans had brought up from first to last 63,000 men, including 11,000 cavalry, and 288 guns. At the outset they had not more than 20,000 available. Careful calculations by the historical section of the German staff show that the forces not merely present but actually engaged were :—

| | French. | Germans. |
|---|---|---|
| Infantry | 83,680 | 47,530 |
| Cavalry | 8,030 | 8,370 |
| Artillery—guns | 432 | 222 |

The Germans lost 14,830 killed and wounded (including 720 officers), or rather more than 22 per cent. of their fighting force.* The French lost 11,460 killed and wounded (9.4 per cent.). Nine hundred and seventy Germans were taken prisoners, but the prisoners and missing on the French side were more than 5,000, taken in the cavalry mêlée and in the first successful advance to the Verdun road. A French gun was captured when Alvensleben rushed the village of Flavigny in the first stage of the battle.

Both sides claimed the victory. "The enemy left us masters of the battlefield," was Bazaine's telegraphic report to the emperor. It was a perfectly honest report, for he had held the position he had taken up, and repulsed attack after attack. "Our troops, worn out by a twelve hours' struggle, encamped on the victorious but bloody field immediately opposite the French lines," was Moltke's message. The Germans claimed that as they had

* Otto Berndt (*Die Zahl im Kriege*) gives the following analysis of the German losses :—

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Infantry | 565 officers | 13,084 men = 25.2 per cent. |
| Cavalry | 104 officers | 1,303 men = 12 per cent. |
| Artillery | 39 officers | 681 men = 14.9 per cent. |

The heaviest loss fell on the 3rd (Brandenburg) Army Corps, namely :—

315 officers, 6,438 men, and 672 horses killed and wounded.
203 men and 6 horses missing.

arrested the French retreat they had scored a success. But there has been a strange amount of exaggeration in the popular German tradition of the battle.*

On the morrow of the battle of Rezonville the officers and men of the French army received with puzzled astonishment and deep disappointment the order to abandon the ground they had held during the hard fight of the day before, and march back to the bold range of heights that rises to the west of Metz. It was a retirement in the face of an enemy whom they felt they had beaten. Were all the results of their victory to be thrown away? Even the soldiers in the ranks knew that two days before the orders had been that every effort must be made to move westward, and place the army between Paris and the invaders. Now they were turning their backs on Paris, and tramping back under the blazing sun over some of the very roads they had wearily traversed on the 15th.

Bazaine knew that now the German army was massing on the ground that Frederick Charles had

* Thus the Emperor William II. said in one of his speeches: "The battle is unparalleled in military history, for a single army corps about 20,000 strong held on to and repulsed a well-equipped enemy more than five times as numerous. Such was the glorious deed of the Brandenburgers, and the Hohenzollerns will never forget the debt they owe them."

Now the plain fact is that the French had never five times 20,000 men in action; and the Brandenburgers, though they fought magnificently, were in serious danger till Voights-Rhetz arrived. The French never made a serious attack, but remained on the defensive. All that Alvensleben's Corps did was to drive in the French first line in the earlier stage of the fight. After that its attacks on the French position were everywhere repulsed.

held at the end of the battle of August 16th. He had never been keen on cutting himself off from Metz, and now he shrank from the responsibility of attempting to continue his march to the westward across the front of the German armies. He was like a timid navigator—afraid to go far from a sheltering port. But he concealed his real intentions by telling his colleagues that he meant to take up a position on the hills west of Metz, renew his supplies of ammunition, give the men a rest, and then rejoin MacMahon by a march to the north-westward.

Frossard, on the left, had the shortest way to go to reach the positions assigned to him on the heights east of Gravelotte and beyond the ravine-like valley by which the Mance brook flows down to the Moselle. The Imperial Guard was to march to Plappeville, where Bazaine had decided to establish his headquarters under the guns of the outlying forts of Metz. Lebœuf's Corps was to take up its position on the heights north of Frossard. L'Admirault's Corps was given the ground about the village of Amanvilliers. Canrobert was to be posted on the extreme right, about St. Privat. He had the longest way to go, and his troops were not all in their bivouacs till late in the afternoon. The retirement was encumbered by huge trains of baggage and long convoys of wounded.

The Germans were concentrating on the ground abandoned to them by the French, and Steinmetz was bringing the 1st Army across the Moselle and

intc line. No attempt was made to harass or even to observe the French retirement. Towards evening there was some skirmishing between detachments pushed forward from the German right and the outposts of Frossard's Corps. But though the Germans had a huge force of cavalry up to the front, no effective reconnoitring work was done, and their plans and orders for next day (August 18th) were based on the false idea that the French line had its right at Amanvilliers, instead of extending northwards to St. Privat and beyond it.

The night was fine and warm, with a clear starlit sky. The French bivouacs, extending along some six miles of the eastern ridge of the plateau, presented a curious spectacle. At the southern end of the line the outposts looked south-westward, towards the direction from which an army might come. But in the centre they were thrown out in the direction in which the columns had marched during the day, and were therefore looking towards Metz, and watching the wooded reverse slope of the ridge. This is almost incredible, but there is positive evidence not only that they looked towards their own fortress, but that during the night they imagined impossible enemies in their actual front and opened fire at trees and shadows. On the west, the side of the enemy, there were no outposts whatever along the greater part of the line, and the baggage wagons were packed together in rows on that side. The whole arrangement shows how utterly incompetent and careless the staff of the army must have been. The firing of

the outposts led to two false alarms during the night —one about 2 a.m., the other shortly before dawn— when the men sprang to arms, and regiments formed up, and batteries hooked in their teams. After the second alarm many of the men did not lie down again, but sat smoking round the camp fires.

When the sun rose, there was the morning roll-call. Then coffee was made, the men cleaned up their rifles and accoutrements, and there were formal inspections. The great camp had the air of an assembly for peace manœuvres. During the morning hours some work was done in the way of entrenching the position, but not many tools were available, and very little was accomplished, except on the left, where Frossard, an engineer officer, did some serious work towards strengthening the front of his line, putting the farmsteads of Moscou, St. Hubert, and Point du Jour into a state of defence, and digging shelter trenches and gun-pits. The men had been living from hand to mouth, chiefly on biscuits, during the last few days. The distribution of a liberal meat ration made the cooking of an early midday meal the chief subject of interest. At Plappeville, Bazaine told his officers that he expected a quiet day, and set his chief of the staff, General Jarras, to work at preparing a long list of promotions and transfers of officers to fill the gaps made by the losses at Borny and Rezonville. A more competent commander would have been early in saddle, riding along the position to ensure that it was all in a state of readiness for defence, and would have sent his cavalry out to scour the

country towards Mars-la-Tour and Rezonville and keep in touch with the Germans.

By noon the six-mile-long camp had the air of a huge picnic party. The men were regaling themselves with a good solid meal of soup, meat, bread, and thin wine. The officers were having their *déjeuner*, some of them comfortably installed at folding tables. Colonel Patry's narrative * gives a striking picture of the state of affairs in L'Admirault's Corps in the right centre. The lieutenant, as he then was, had enjoyed a good *déjeuner*, and then wrote a letter home, and set off to post it at the field post-office wagon. On the way he saw the major of his battalion shaving beside his tent, and jokingly asked him if he was preparing for an excursion to Metz. "If I am killed to-day I should like to look a bit tidy," was the reply; and Patry told him there was no chance of that—"everything was a dead calm." Near the post-office wagon, which was standing among rows of other vehicles, he found some transport officers still sitting round a table with wine and cigars. He was chatting with them when suddenly there was a sharp explosion close by. A shell had burst among the wagons. The men rushed to arms; he ran to his regiment, and found it formed up facing towards Metz. "Crash, bang, crash!" shell after shell. Horses were running wild, after breaking from their picket ropes; drivers tried to catch them. Wagons were being dragged away. Guns were galloping up to the crest of the ridge. The regiment faced

* *La Guerre telle qu'elle est.*

about, and marched up to the summit north of Amanvilliers, and he saw that the hostile fire was coming from the line of crests above the woods at the other side of the valley, west of the French position. The battle of Gravelotte had begun.

All the morning, while the French were making holiday in careless security, the Germans had been marching. Six army corps, forming their front line, had been making a great wheeling movement, pivoting on the right and swinging round towards the north-east, across miles of country. Behind them came Alvensleben's Corps in reserve, after its trying day on the 16th, and the 2nd (Pomeranian) Corps tramping up from Pont-à-Mousson through the Gorze woods, the last of the German units to cross the Moselle. More than 160,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, and 700 guns were marching to battle, while Bazaine and the Army of the Rhine were enjoying their restful holiday.

On the German side there was no holiday-making. Some of the corps marched as early as 4 a.m. At half-past five the "Red Prince" was in the saddle at Mars-la-Tour, directing the movements on the left. The old king drove up from Pont-à-Mousson in the early morning, passing the columns of the 2nd Corps already tramping through the woods. By six he was mounted at Flavigny, and rode towards Gravelotte, accompanied by Bismarck and Moltke. The plan of the battle was that Steinmetz, with three corps of the 1st Army, was to swing round and engage and occupy the French in front; while Prince

Frederick Charles with the 2nd Army, was to wheel against their right, sending the Saxons and the Guard Corps to work round its exposed flank, envelop and drive it in, rolling up the whole of the enemy's line. As already noted, it was supposed that the extreme right of the French was at Amanvilliers, or just north of it. The result of this misinformation was that when the contact with the enemy came the Guards found themselves in front of Canrobert's Corps at St. Privat, and the Saxons had to make a longer detour than they expected in order to reach the flank of the French line.

Steinmetz's attack on the French left and centre was not to begin till Prince Frederick Charles was in position for his attack on the right, which was intended to be the decisive move of the day. But the beginning of the battle was precipitated by one of Steinmetz's corps commanders, Von Mannstein. Shortly after midday he had led his corps, the 9th (the men of Schleswig-Holstein and Hesse), to the high ground east of Habonville, and in front of Amanvilliers. Looking across the valley that separated him from the heights held by the French, he saw L'Admirault's camp, the picture of peaceful security—wagons parked in long lines, horses feeding at their picket lines, tents standing, men strolling about. The temptation to give the French a startling surprise was too much for him. He unlimbered his batteries and sent shell after shell across the valley. Moltke, who was with the king between Flavigny and Gravelotte, heard the guns, and knew that they had opened

too soon. He sent off a staff officer with a message telling him not to begin his attack till further orders. But before the galloper reached him, Steinmetz had heard the reports of Mannstein's guns and the reply of the French artillery, and had not only brought his batteries into action all along his front, but sent forward his infantry into the woods beyond Gravelotte along the Mance ravine. So by Mannstein's precipitation the battle began some two hours before Moltke intended.

In twenty minutes Von Goeben's Corps, on the German right, had 100 guns in action against Frossard's position. They sent their shells high over the wooded hollow of the Mance against the three entrenched farmsteads on the opposite heights. Frossard's guns replied, but the marked superiority of the German artillery was soon evident. They were breech-loaders against muzzle-loaders, firing faster and with less exposure for the men serving them. Their shells and fuzes were better. Every German shell burst as it fell. Numbers of the French shells simply scored the ground or buried themselves in it without exploding. The farm of St. Hubert was gradually reduced to a mass of ruins. Early in the fight Moscou and Point du Jour were set on fire. Captain Fritz Hoenig, in his study of the fight on the French right, gives a terrible description of the destruction of these two farms by Von Goeben's artillery.

"At these points," he says, "hardly any French were found killed or wounded by infantry bullets. Almost all had been destroyed by the fire of the guns. In the large heaps of ruins,

especially in Moscou, the defenders lay all around, fearfully torn and mutilated by the German shells; limbs and bodies were blown from thirty to fifty paces apart, and the stones and the sandy ground were here and there covered with pools of blood. In Moscou and Point du Jour some French were found burnt in their defensive positions, and a large number of wounded showed marks of the flames, which had destroyed both uniforms and limbs. All around lay rifles and swords, knapsacks and cartridges, the remains of limbers which had been blown up, broken gun-carriages and wheels, and a large number of hideously torn and mangled horses. The ground was changed by the German artillery fire into a desert covered with many corpses. The interiors of Moscou and Point du Jour were not passable after the battle until they had been cleared."

The infantry advance gradually drove the French out of the woods in the Mance valley; but Frossard had no intention of persistently holding this advanced line. By this time, too, the French artillery on the heights was suffering severely, and many batteries had ceased firing. Only the long-ranging French rifles replied to the German infantry and artillery fire. Along the eastern side of the hollow of the Mance the Germans massed for a further advance, and successfully rushed the ruined farm of St. Hubert and the chalk and gravel pits near it. But all efforts to press on to Moscou and Point du Jour ended in costly failure. The flames had driven the French from the farms, but between them, and on the slope above them, they held on doggedly, despite the German bombardment, and drove every attack back with the deadly fire of their Chassepots. The German advance on the right was thus brought to a standstill, and Frossard's main position was intact.

In the centre, things had not gone much better for the invaders. When Von Mannstein opened fire on Amanvilliers, he believed that he was fronting the extreme right of the French, and that there were no enemies to the north of his position. So he pushed the left of his line of guns well forward. Then from the heights towards St. Privat Canrobert's batteries opened, and brought a cross-fire to bear on the left of the German artillery. Mannstein was about to withdraw the exposed guns when L'Admirault sent his infantry down the heights to attack them. The French came on in a dense line of skirmishers, backed up by a formed column of infantry. They drove in the German troops that were thrown forward to protect the artillery, and as the guns limbered up, horses and drivers were shot down, and the Frenchmen dashed in among them. For a few minutes they were in possession of several of them. A rush of German infantry saved most of them, but when the French retired again on Amanvilliers they dragged back with them two captured cannon as trophies of their successful counter-attack.

The fight on this part of the field then became for a while an artillery duel, in which the French, having considerably more guns in action than their opponents, more than held their own. The balance was not restored till, towards three o'clock, the artillery of the Prussian Guard came into action on Von Mannstein's left.

So far, after three hours of battle, the day had gone

well for the French. They might have done better still if there had been any general plan for the action. As it was, each of the corps commanders had to make an isolated defence of his own part of the position. The cavalry divisions, which could have done useful work in guarding the exposed right flank, were standing idly by their horses in the wooded valleys to the rear of the line. Bourbaki's splendid regiments of the Imperial Guard were waiting near Plappeville, listening impatiently to the roar of the battle in which they were not allowed to play any part. Bazaine, when he heard the first shots, had told General Jarras that the affair would not be serious, and he had better remain at his desk. He himself mounted, and with only two of his officers rode up the hill of Fort St. Quentin, whence he watched the fight on the French left. The fury of the German attack on this side confirmed him in the delusion that haunted him throughout—the idea that the enemy was anxious to cut in between him and Metz. This was why he kept the Imperial Guard idle for hours behind his left, and paid no attention whatever to his right flank, where the real danger lay.

On that side Prince Frederick Charles was now bringing the Prussian Guard Corps into action. Part of its artillery had been hurried forward to support Von Mannstein. As the rest of the batteries came up with the vanguard of the infantry, they were formed in line beyond St. Ail to prepare the way for an attack on the village of Ste. Marie aux Chênes. It is a large village of solidly-built stone houses,

about a mile in front of the St. Privat position, and considerably below it. Canrobert had occupied it as an advanced post, sending there the 94th Regiment, under the veteran Colonel Geslin—two and a half battalions, or about 1,500 men. After a heavy bombardment the Guards stormed Ste. Marie, meeting with an obstinate resistance, for the soldiers of the old Imperial Army of France, long-service men whose whole active life belonged to the regiment, were splendid fighters.*

When Ste. Marie had been won, the line of guns that had been in action against it swung round and took position to prepare the way for the attack on the heights by firing on St. Privat, while the Guard formed up right and left of the captured village. The bombardment of St. Privat began about half-past three, and for an hour and a half 200 guns rained their shells on the place and the ground about it.

St. Privat stands a little back from the edge of the flat-topped ridge held by the French. From Ste. Marie only its church tower and some outlying houses are visible. From the crest the ground slopes

* Captain Fritz Hoenig, a most competent critic, who fought through the war of 1870–71, and afterwards devoted years of research to the study of it, expresses the opinion that the infantry of the French Imperial Army was "undoubtedly one of the best that ever existed, though its tactics were faulty." And he goes on to say: "It remains to be proved whether French infantry will ever again fight as it did at Woerth and Gravelotte." He does not think so. "But after all," he adds, "the same remark applies to infantry other than the French, owing, in fact, to the universal introduction of short service."

towards Ste. Marie for rather more than a mile. The gentle declivity is perfectly unbroken by obstacles or cover of any kind. There are no walls or fences to the open fields. From Ste. Marie a road runs up the slope to St. Privat. It is a French road of the usual kind, with a ditch on each side, and rows of tall poplars by the ditches, making the well-paved highway into a stately avenue. The German guns simply crushed out the fire of Canrobert's artillery. The French infantry lay crouched along and behind the crest waiting for the infantry attack, to which they knew the fierce bombardment was a prelude. In front, beyond rifle range, and now safe even from shell fire (for the French guns were silenced), the Guards waited for the word to advance. The Prince of Wurtemberg, who commanded them, had formed them up as men formed for the attack in the days before the breech-loading rifle had fully proved its deadly power. They waited in two solid masses, right and left of the Ste. Marie road. Each mass, more than 7,000 strong, was formed in a huge column, a forest of bayonets half a battalion in line in front, and the other half-battalions in the same formation behind it, one after the other.

It had been originally intended that the attack of the Guards should be combined with that of the Saxon Corps, which was to work round and fall on the flank and rear of the French right. But there was as yet no sign of the Saxons coming into action; but, on the other hand, the fire of the French from St. Privat had almost ceased, and Wurtemberg believed

that their resisting power had been thoroughly broken by the bombardment. So a few minutes after five o'clock he gave the order to advance against the heights.

Out marched the 15,000 picked Guardsmen on to the gently-sloping meadows. At first the two great columns moved forward as if they were at some ceremonial review. Drums beat the charge; standards waved in the bright summer sunlight, over the long rows of glittering bayonets. The mounted officers rode proudly in front, General von Pape, a soldier of the Rhineland, at the head of the column north of the poplar-shaded road; General Budritzki, a Pole, leading the right or southern column. Over their heads the 200 guns kept up their fire against the crest of the ridge.

But Canrobert and his officers and soldiers of the 6th Corps were not the men to be cowed by mere bombardment, however heavy it might be. As the German columns came on, some of the French guns were run up again to the edge of the plateau, and, disregarding the hostile artillery fire, opened on the advancing infantry. But they still moved onward in stately march. The Chassepot rifle had a long range. When the heads of the columns were still three-quarters of a mile down the slope, a roar of infantry fire burst out along the crest. Not much harm was done to the advancing Guardsmen at first by this long-range fire; but in five minutes more, when the distance was reduced to half a mile, the Germans began to fall fast. And the fire became

hotter and hotter, for more and more rifles were rushed up to the French front, and Canrobert's men were firing as fast as they could pull bolt, slip in cartridge, and touch off trigger. They had a huge target in those two moving masses of dark-uniformed men, marching up a green slope that was smooth as table-top and gave not an inch of cover. The leading battalions of the Guard broke into lines of skirmishers, and opened fire to cover the advance; but, shooting uphill, most of their bullets went high over the crest, now wrapped in a dense bank of smoke, torn here and there by the red flashes of cannon, while the rifle bullets came down the hill in a sweeping leaden hail. Every mounted officer of the Guard was down, mostly shot, for only a few had dismounted to lead their horses. The Rifles of the Guard, who led the left attack, lost their colonel and 17 officers in two minutes. Presently every officer of the battalion had fallen, and a few of the sergeants were leading it.

For about 200 yards more the attack struggled forward through the death-dealing storm of bullet and shell. Then it came to a stop. Even the bravest could do no more. One man in every four had fallen, and all this in less than ten minutes. The dead and wounded lay in heaps; but these splendid soldiers, if they could not advance farther, would not turn and retire. They lay down in long, huddled lines where they stood, and waited while the fire, now less deadly, swept over them, the leading ranks answering back. The French fusillade slackened. It had been so fast and furious that most of the men

had used up their sixty rounds. The pouches of the dead and wounded were searched for cartridges. Canrobert sent off frantic messages for a fresh supply, and later on a small quantity reached him; but meanwhile more guns galloped up to the ground in front of him, and a fiercer bombardment of St. Privat began, this time from 300 cannon.

The battle had lasted for five hours and a half, and the French were still everywhere victorious. When he saw the Guards advancing, Von Mannstein, on their right, had pressed forward towards Amanvilliers; but when he saw the destruction that had overtaken the Guards Corps he checked his advance, and continued the artillery fight. Von Zastrow had made no impression on Lebœuf in the French left centre, and where Frossard fought on the left the German attack had failed, and failed disastrously.

Here the veteran Steinmetz had made mistakes that cost him his command, for in the German army no length of service is allowed even to palliate a bad blunder. He saw the farms of Moscou and Point du Jour wrapped in smoke and flame; the French artillery on the slopes above them absolutely silenced, even their rifle fire gradually diminishing. He came to the conclusion that the French resistance was here thoroughly broken, and that they were on the point of abandoning the position. He had with him, near Gravelotte, the 4th Uhlans (lancers) and several regiments of cuirassiers. He sent the cavalry commander an order in writing, telling him to advance by the ravine-like pass by which the Grave-

lotte road descended into the Mance ravine, cross the wooded hollow, push on to the captured farm of St. Hubert, and there wheel to the left, form line, and charge the enemy, "who was inclined to give way." He added that the charge was to be continued "right up to the glacis of Metz." It was a mad order. Even supposing Frossard's men were thoroughly beaten, which was not the case, and though Steinmetz did not know the Imperial Guard was in reserve behind them, his map must have shown him that a pursuit, even of broken men, towards Metz would soon come under the heavy artillery of Forts St. Quentin and Plappeville.

At the same time he ordered nearly a third of his artillery to cease fire, limber up, and cross the Mance valley with the cavalry. They were to open on the French at close range from near St. Hubert, and, covered by their fire, the infantry was to advance after the charging squadrons. It was to be a beautifully combined attack of all three arms. The drawback was that it was based on the false assumption that Frossard was already half beaten.

Lancers, cuirassiers, and artillery streamed down through the woods of the Mance ravine, crowded together on the narrow road; but as they went up the opposite slope and tried to form line, a tornado of shells and bullets swept down on them from the hilltops and from the ground about the burning farmsteads. The temporary silence of so many of Steinmetz's guns had allowed Frossard once more to bring his batteries into action, and his infantry, sheltered

in its trenches, was not in the least inclined to give way. On the contrary, it was full of fight.

This terrible burst of fire came as a surprise to the Germans. At the head of the dense column men and horses fell in heaps. Horses broke away, and a crowd of wounded and unwounded fugitives struggled to reach the shelter of the woods in the hollow. The teams of a couple of artillery wagons bolted back down the slope. Bullets and shells rained steadily on the disordered mass. Out of the crowd the 4th Uhlans and four batteries pushed up to St. Hubert. The colonel of the lancers saw at once that it was hopeless to charge uphill into the volcano of fire along the crest. But to retire was impossible, for the roadway was blocked by the broken column; so his men halted, and with splendid courage endured a heavy loss. The horses of the first gun fell in a heap, and it stopped on the slope. The five other guns of the battery got up to St. Hubert and unlimbered amid a hurricane of bursting shells; but as the drivers took the teams and limbers away they could not stop them. All the horses bolted madly down the hill, some of them wounded; others were dragged along dead in the traces. The three other batteries came into action, only to lose half their men in a few minutes.

The cuirassiers and the rest of the artillery had now been recalled. To cover their retirement the Prussian infantry pushed up from the woods of the ravine; but now Frossard's men dashed down the slope with the bayonet. Everything went back

in a confused panic before their charge. The guns were saved by running them down into the woods, which were now full of demoralized fugitives, some of whom had even thrown away their arms. Frossard's counter-attack was made by only a few battalions, and was withdrawn as soon as the Germans gave way. The purely defensive ideas of the French staff had lost a great chance. It was the moment for an attack in force, backed up by the reserves of the Imperial Guard.

Frossard made a second counter-attack with a brigade of infantry a little later, when the Germans made one more attempt to push forward from the Mance woods. Again everything gave way before the rush of the French bayonets, and the ruined farm of St. Hubert was retaken. From the heights on the opposite side the German artillery stopped the advance with a heavy and well-aimed fire; but up out of the valley towards Gravelotte there came a mass of broken troops—several regiments mixed together and reduced to a mere mob. The crowd came running towards their own guns, which they silenced for a while, officers trying in vain to stop them with sword and pistol drawn to frighten them into obedience to orders. Through the line of guns they rushed and into the street of Gravelotte, hustling and nearly dismounting the old king as they surged past the staff in disorderly flight. There was another panic a few minutes later as a stampede of frightened horses came rushing through the village. On the German right there was the menace of disaster.

It has been truly said that in war a man counts for more than men. On that July evening, if the French army had had a better chief than Bazaine, a great victory was within their grasp. While the German right attack was dissolving into demoralized mob of beaten men against Frossard's defence, Bourbaki's magnificent regiments of the Imperial Guard were waiting idly in front of Fort Plappeville, less than five miles from the fighting line. There were nine battalions of Grenadiers, twelve of Voltigeurs (light infantry), three of Zouaves, and a battalion of Chasseurs, with several batteries of artillery and machine-guns. Had they been flung against the German right, under a leader like Bourbaki the chances were that they would have broken it up, and opened the way to a disastrous defeat of the whole invading army. But Bazaine had only the feeble idea of " preventing the Germans cutting him off from Metz " and fighting purely defensive battles. He left the Guards idle for more than four hours, and then used them in mere driblets. From his position on the hill of St. Quentin he saw, about six o'clock, the western sun shining on moving columns of flashing helmets behind Gravelotte. The German right was being reinforced in the nick of time. It was Fransecky's Corps of Pomeranians arriving from Gorze and at last coming into action. Bazaine then sent some of the Voltigeurs of the Imperial Guard to reinforce Frossard.

By this time serious danger was again threatening the French right, about which Bazaine never seemed

to trouble himself. The Saxons had at last reached the valley of the Orne, a little river that runs down to the Moselle below Metz, cutting a hollow through the plateau north of St. Privat and Roncourt. The valley should have been held by one of the French cavalry divisions. As the Crown Prince of Saxony marched into it he found nothing to oppose him, and sent his cavalry on in advance to cut the railway and telegraph lines between Metz and Thionville. Then he turned to his right to move from the northwards on St. Privat, driving a French detachment out of Roncourt and bringing his artillery into action against Canrobert's flank.

St. Privat was now subjected to a cross-fire from the Saxon guns to the northward and the artillery of the Guard to the westward. Canrobert sent off messages begging for ammunition, which only reached him in scanty amounts, and asking for reinforcements. Bazaine ordered Bourbaki to move northwards with a brigade of the Guard; but they had started too late, and were still moving up the forest-bordered roads towards St. Privat when its fate was decided.

At seven o'clock the Crown Prince of Saxony ordered his infantry to advance. At the same time the Guard again moved against the west front of the position. In front and flank more than 40,000 men had been launched on a converging attack upon the village and the heights around it. It was only a comparatively feeble fire that now met the advancing Germans, for the French were short of cartridges. But they had their bayonets, and in and around St. Privat they

held on stubbornly with cold steel, even after the sun went down, fighting desperately to the last by the light of the burning houses. One gallant battalion, the 9th Chasseurs, held the walled churchyard with the bayonet against overwhelming numbers long after the rest of the place had been taken. At last St. Privat was won, and in the gathering darkness the French fell back down the forest roads fighting to the last, the Grenadiers of the Guard arriving only in time to check the pursuit.

As the attack closed on St. Privat, Von Mannstein, with Voights-Rhetz's Corps in support, had moved upon Amanvilliers. But here L'Admirault held him back till the collapse of Canrobert's defence on his right exposed his flank, and he too had to fall back, leaving Amanvilliers a mass of smoking ruins. On the northern heights there was firing along the margin of the woods long after dark. But the French right had been driven in, and 50,000 Germans were established on the plateau.

On the other end of the position the French were still victorious. Lebœuf's position was intact, and Frossard had again beaten off a German attack made by Fransecky's fresh troops. When at last the firing ceased on the German right, though they had again taken St. Hubert they had failed to make the least impression on the main position of the defence, and the woods of the Mance valley behind the fighting line were crowded with disbanded men. Moltke, Bismarck, and the king had an anxious time, until towards eleven o'clock the news

reached Gravelotte of the victory on the left, which would make the whole French position untenable next day.

Before morning the whole French army was retiring to the protection of the forts of Metz. Rezonville had stopped Bazaine's retreat; the victory of Gravelotte drove the feeble French generalissimo back to the entrenched camp, where he waited in almost unbroken inactivity till famine and fever ruined his army, and after ten weeks the capitulation of October 27th handed over to the conquerors a great fortress, 170,000 prisoners—including three marshals of France—56 eagles, and more than 1,500 guns. The three days of August 16th, 17th, and 18th were the critical days of the war. Gravelotte was its decisive victory.

The French losses in the battle were 7,850 killed and wounded, and 4,000 prisoners—mostly those cut off when the right was outflanked and driven in. The German losses were much heavier: 19,640 men were killed or wounded, including 900 officers. The heaviest loss fell on the Guard Corps, which in its two attacks lost 309 officers and 7,923 men.*

The battlefield in front of and around St. Privat and Amanvilliers, the scene of the fiercest fighting and most fearful loss in the great war, still bears a visible record of the strife. There is no need for the

* The Rifle Battalion of the Guard lost all its officers and 431 men (44 per cent.). The 2nd Grenadier Regiment lost no less than 38 officers and 1,020 men; and the 4th Grenadiers, 27 officers and 902 men.

traveller to ask for a guide to point out the line of the heights which the Germans stormed and the French held so persistently. It is marked by a scattered line of monuments, and by a denser line of large, flat-topped mounds, each crowned by a simple cross. These are the graves of the German dead. Under each of the mounds some hundreds lie buried. They rise like green islands out of the growing corn or the ridges of the cultivated ground.

A gigantic bronze statue of St. Michael, a stern-looking warrior-angel leaning on a long sword, looks from the summit of a rock-hewn pedestal on this mile-long cemetery. On the day this monument was unveiled by the Kaiser William II., he said he wished it to be a memorial, not only of those who had fought for the German Fatherland, but also of those equally brave men who had fought there a lost battle for France. The bronze angel looks towards France. The new frontier is here only a few hundred yards away. It crosses the slope of the plateau in an irregular line marked by posts at intervals. As one walks over the battlefield one is now in France, now in Germany, and one meets carbine-armed customs guards patrolling the roads and field paths.

The great mounds are kept in perfect order, and on the crosses are wreaths of immortelles, renewed each year by German patriotic societies. The inscriptions on the crosses give not the names of the dead but the numbers and names of the regiments to which they belonged. So many of such a regiment

"here rest in God"—this is the formula. Round St. Privat the graves cluster thickly, and there are walled cemeteries with many monuments, each cemetery containing the graves of the officers and men of a regiment of the German Guards.

The French dead lie on the other side of the frontier. More than ten years ago their bones were disinterred and transferred to a stately mortuary chapel, where each year a requiem mass is celebrated on August 18th, in the presence of a congregation of veterans of the day. It was on the occasion of the transfer that, for the first and last time since 1870, a French general marched into German territory. It was General Jamont, sent at the head of a picked force of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, to act as a guard of honour to the funeral cars. He had halted his column on the border-line near Ste. Marie aux Chênes, when the German commander invited him to march across; and then French and German troops formed one procession, uniting to honour the heroic dead.

The grave-mound cemetery on the ridge of St. Privat is not the only field of the dead round Metz. The graves cluster along the whole battle front to Gravelotte, and there are more of them southwards by Rezonville and Mars-la-Tour, and eastwards about Borny, and north-eastward in front of Noisseville.* One realizes the awful cost of war as one visits

* The August battles round Metz are variously named by French and German writers. The battle of the 14th is known to the French as the battle of Borny; to the Germans as the

this group of famous battlefields, and then one must reflect that, besides the young lives cut short by shell and bullet and blade, there were the crowded hospitals, and the desolation carried to tens of thousands of French and German homes, as women and children heard the news of the fate of husband, father, brother, and son. This is the dark shadow cast far and wide by the glory of the battlefield.

battle of Colombey. The battle of the 16th is variously known as the battle of Rezonville, Mars-la-Tour, or Vionville, and in some French histories of the war it is called the battle of Gravelotte. This name is usually given by German writers to the battle of August 18th, which is known to the French as the battle of St. Privat.

## CHAPTER VII.

### SEDAN.

*September* 1, 1870.

FRANCE had plunged into the war with Prussia in full confidence of winning an easy victory. But in the very first month of the conflict there had been a terrible awakening to the hard realities of the situation. The Army of the Rhine had been beaten, and its collapse in the field had shown that the military forces of the empire, instead of being prepared for war, were hopelessly unready for it. There were shortness of numbers, deficiency in equipment, utter lack of information, complete absence of anything like intelligent leadership or efficient staff work.

War had been declared on July 19, 1870. On August 19th Marshal Bazaine was shut up in Metz with the main body of the Army of the Rhine, having lost the great battle of Gravelotte the day before. Marshal MacMahon, defeated at Woerth on August 6th, was retreating on Châlons, followed up by the German 3rd Army under the Crown Prince of Prussia.*

* Afterwards the Emperor Frederick of Germany.

Paris was preparing for a siege. The Emperor Napoleon was at Châlons, where a reserve army was being hastily assembled.

Châlons had been the training centre of the French army since Napoleon III. established a permanent camp there at the close of the Crimean War. In July 1870 every available man had been hurried to the front, and the great camp with its endless streets of barrack huts had been for a while nearly deserted. A few depot battalions of regiments remained there, and to these were soon added detachments that had failed to reach the front before the German advance cut Metz off from the rest of France. Then, when it was realized that a new army must be improvised to interpose between Paris and the onward march of the invaders, the numbers rose rapidly. New regiments of half-trained recruits and belated reservists were formed by drawing on the depots of infantry and cavalry throughout France. Battalions of the National Guard were called out for service. Marines were landed from the fleet. A new army corps, the 12th, was formed under the command of General Lebrun. The 1st Corps (Ducrot), the 5th (De Failly), and the 7th (Douay), all lately under MacMahon's command in Alsace, were ordered to concentrate on Châlons. It was hoped that by the third week of August 100,000 men would be assembled, and it was expected that the French would offer battle in the wide plains round the camp—historic ground where fourteen centuries earlier Aetius and Theodoric, with an allied army

of Romans and Visigoths, had defeated the barbarian hordes of Attila.

It was generally supposed that Bazaine could not make a prolonged resistance at Metz. The supplies there, originally intended for the garrison and the citizens, would be rapidly consumed, now that the place had also to feed an army of 170,000 men, which had brought no considerable reserve of provisions with it. Prince Frederick Charles had been placed in command of the blockading forces, made up of the 1st Army and four corps of the 2nd, with two cavalry divisions—180,000 men, soon raised to 200,000 by reinforcements from Germany. These were entrenching themselves in commanding positions round the place, and Bazaine showed no disposition to make a serious attempt to break out.

For the advance on Châlons and Paris the Germans had the 3rd Army, under the Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia, already following up MacMahon, and a new 4th Army, officially known as the "*Maas Armee*" or "Army of the Meuse," formed under the command of the Crown Prince (later King) of Saxony. This was made up of troops detached from the 2nd Army and included the Guards, and the 4th and 12th (Saxon) Corps. The Army of the Meuse and the 3rd Army were to move westward under the general command of the King of Prussia and his chief of the staff, Von Moltke. Their combined force would be over 200,000 men (including 20,000 cavalry), with some 700 guns.

The invaders moved westward in several parallel

columns, with the cavalry pushed well out in advance to a distance of forty or fifty miles. But these daring horsemen found no enemy in their front, no detachments of French cavalry watching and delaying their march. When the leading squadrons approached Châlons the great camp was found to be deserted, with several of its storehouses on fire. The French army had simply disappeared. For a few hours there was anxious perplexity at the German headquarters. Had the French fallen back on Paris, or were they moving in some other direction? The mystery was solved by information gleaned by the Prussian embassies at London and Brussels from unguarded statements telegraphed to French and Belgian newspapers by war correspondents with the French army—for those were the days when the press censorship had not yet been invented. These items of news telegraphed to Berlin, and thence to the headquarters in the field, told of masses of French troops moving through and round Rheims and out to the northward and north-eastward. Promptly Von Moltke issued orders to stop the westward advance, and swing the columns round to the northward, while the cavalry rode hard in the same direction, seeking to gain touch with the enemy.

What had the French been doing, and what was their present object? On August 16th, the morning of the battle of Rezonville, the emperor had left Bazaine's army and hurried to Châlons. In the great days of the Second Empire his arrival there had always been the occasion of imposing military

display—reviews, field days, thunder of saluting cannon, and the rest. Now he almost slunk into his splendidly equipped residence in the camp, and when, next day, he rode round it and saw some of the miscellaneous bodies of troops assembled there his impressions were disappointing. The official gazette declared that he was received with enthusiasm. But the truth was that the men were mostly sullen and silent. When cheers were called for they were mingled with insulting outcries. Worst of all was the reception he had from the Paris National Guard, twelve battalions (of which only two were yet armed). They showed such a hopeless lack of discipline and such a disaffected spirit that at a council of war next day it was decided that they would be not only useless but dangerous with the field army, and they were sent back by train to Paris, the official order disguising the ugly facts of the situation by declaring that these citizen soldiers were to have the privilege of being employed in the defence of their homes and their native city.

At this same council of war important decisions were taken. Marshal MacMahon was appointed commander-in-chief of the "Army of Châlons." General Trochu, who had been till now in command of the camp, was named military governor of Paris. He was to return there, take charge of the defence preparations, and announce that the emperor would shortly arrive in the capital to share its perils. MacMahon with the Army of Châlons was to retire on Paris and offer battle to the invaders before

its fortifications. Trochu went to Paris the same day and explained to the empress and the ministry the plans adopted by the council of war. But now political considerations came into play, and were allowed to dictate a new plan of campaign. Wars are waged for political ends, and politics have therefore to be considered in the general direction of a campaign, but almost without exception when political reasons are allowed completely to sway the course of a campaign the results are disastrous. In this case the ministers declared that if the emperor returned to Paris under the shadow of defeat there would be an immediate revolution; that for the present he must stay with the army, and that, moreover, the Army of Châlons must not fall back upon Paris; it must at all hazards endeavour to hold out a hand to Bazaine. Further, the Minister of War, General de Montauban, Comte de Palikao * had a new plan of campaign ready. The Army of Châlons was to make a rapid march on Verdun, overwhelming the northern columns of the German advance before the southern contingents could come to their help, and at the same time Bazaine was to break out of Metz and join hands with MacMahon at Verdun. Unfortunately, however, for the plan, Bazaine was not at all ready to risk anything, and the Army of Châlons was still incomplete, and in any

* De Montauban was a good soldier. He had commanded in 1860 the French troops who, as the allies of the English, helped to capture Pekin. His title of count was given him for the victory won over the Chinese at the bridge of Pa-li-kao during the advance.

case could hardly have made the rapid dash to the eastwards that the plan required. Palikao was thinking of the wonderful strokes, now here, now there, by which the great Napoleon in 1814 had beaten the Allies in detail and paralyzed their whole movement on Paris. But Napoleon III. could not inspire the men of 1870 as his uncle had electrified those of 1814, and the improvised Army of Châlons could not be compared with the splendid veterans of the First Empire.

Paris and Châlons debated possibilities in hurried telegraph messages. News came from Bazaine—passed through the German lines by trusty agents and wired from Thionville. These brief dispatches told how his army was reorganizing after the battle of Gravelotte, and added that Bazaine was hoping soon to attempt a movement northwards from Metz that would enable him to reach the line of fortified towns along the Belgian frontier.

And now—perhaps on this suggestion—Palikao and the Paris Government proposed a new plan, which MacMahon very reluctantly accepted. His own wish was to withdraw towards Lille, further reinforce his army in Northern France, allow the Germans to advance on Paris, and then fall upon them. But Palikao told him that to retire to the north-westward would be to abandon Bazaine. At all costs he must try to rescue Metz and the Army of the Rhine. He was therefore directed to march from Châlons and Rheims north-eastward to Montmedy, on the Belgian frontier, then eastwards by the line of old frontier

fortresses towards Thionville, north of Metz. He would have to make forced marches in order to gain at the outset so much of a start that the Germans, when they discovered the movement, would not be able to interpose between him and Metz. Bazaine would be ready to co-operate with him. The besieging army of Prince Frederick Charles would be caught between hammer and anvil; then the combined armies of Bazaine and MacMahon would be on the line of communications of the main German field army, between it and the Rhine, and outnumbering it by 50 per cent.

The plan supposed that the Army of Châlons could make a rapid march, combine its operations perfectly with those of Bazaine, and completely destroy the force besieging Metz before the main German army could intervene in any way. There was just a chance of success, but failure would mean disaster, and the loss of the only army France now had in the field. MacMahon thought the chance of success small, the danger of disaster enormous, but he accepted the plan and tried to execute it, hoping that if things did not develop as the Paris Government anticipated, he might, before he had gone too far, still save the Army of Châlons by a retreat to the north-westward.

The Army of Châlons began its adventurous march from Rheims on August 23rd. The total force was about 130,000 men, organized in four army corps (1st, Ducrot; 5th, De Failly; 7th, Felix Douay; 12th, Lebrun) and two cavalry divisions (heavy

cavalry, De Bonnemains; light cavalry, De Marguérite). The whole of the 1st and part of the 5th Corps had already suffered severely in action. The losses in men had been partly repaired by drafts of recruits and reservists from the depots. The loss of material and equipment had been less fully made good. Some of the batteries had not all their guns; there was a deficiency of transport; in several regiments only half the men had knapsacks. All the three corps that had made the long retreat from Alsace had suffered from fatigue, irregular rations, and exposure to weather. The men were physically run down and depressed with the sense of failure. Lebrun's corps (the 12th) was made up of a division of regulars that at the outset of the war had been posted on the Pyrenean frontier (while there was still some fear that Spain might act as the ally of Germany); a division of marines, good solid troops; and a division of improvised regiments of depot troops and recruits. These last were, like the new levies drafted into the other corps, rather an element of weakness. The recruits were untrained, and many of the reservists had never handled the new rifle. At Châlons they were taken to the ranges, and each man fired *five* shots. This was all the musketry training they received.

In the first two marches good progress was made. Then began the difficulties that might have been expected with troops who were wearied and dispirited at the very outset. It was found that after the first spurt the men could not march far or fast, and

matters were made worse by the blunders of the staff. Columns of troops blocked each other's way. Trains of wagons made the roads impassable for hours. Corps and divisions reached their bivouacs late, or halted where they ought not to have been, so that next day's orders reached them late. The march of the army was dragging and falling into disarray when everything depended on a swift and ordered advance to the north-eastward. On account of difficulties of transport MacMahon lengthened the distance to be covered by bringing the general line of advance nearer to that of the Mézières railway. Worst of all, he kept his two divisions of cavalry, not on his right, where they might have been used to screen the movement by driving in the German patrols, but on his left, where they were useless. Throughout the war the imperial generals seemed to think cavalry was a thing to be kept for charging on the battlefield, but not to be used on the line of march.*

The German war leaders knew better. As their armies turned northwards the cavalry were flung out along every road to feel for MacMahon, and soon parties of daring horsemen showed themselves on the

* In a memorandum written after the war, Marshal MacMahon himself attributed the neglect of a proper use of the cavalry in the war of 1870 for securing the safety of the army and keeping watch on the enemy to habits acquired in Algerian frontier warfare. In Algeria the cavalry used to make a short ride out to the front before the march started to see that the near ground was clear, and then it remained with the infantry, ready to charge in action. The actual scouting was left to native auxiliaries, who were relied upon to keep touch with the enemy.

flank of Douay's Corps. Driven off by rifle fire, they rode away, only to reappear again and again, hanging upon the flank of the line of march in ever-increasing numbers. Now was the time when the French cavalry should have been sent to drive them back and find out what was behind them; but instead of this Douay jumped to the conclusion that he was about to be attacked in force, and for a whole day halted his corps in order of battle, this, too, at a time when every hour of steady marching was of value. All the while he had in his front only a few squadrons of German cavalry.

MacMahon now thought that he was too late, and began a retirement to the north-westward. But he had no sooner reported this to Paris than he received positive orders to resume the original direction. So another day was lost.

The heads of his columns were now nearing the crossings of the Meuse. He had intended to pass the river at Stenay and Dun, but he found that these places were already occupied by the enemy. He changed the direction of his march, bringing it still nearer the Belgian frontier, and his vanguard secured the river crossing at Mouzon. He now knew that the Germans must be close on his right flank and nearly heading him off. But he had only the vaguest information as to their numbers and positions, and supposed he had only to do with the Crown Prince's army. Of the Army of the Meuse he seems not even to have suspected the existence.

On August 30th there was a disaster. The French

army was partly across the Meuse. The 7th Corps (De Failly) was lagging behind, and farthest to the south of the troops who had not yet crossed. On the 29th it had made a long march, and had halted for the night at Beaumont, within a few hundred yards of the margin of a wide forest tract, one of the southern outlying woods of the forest country of the Ardennes. Next morning De Failly decided to make a late start and give his men a rest. No patrols were sent into the woods, the only outposts were close in to the camp, and the general treated as idle gossip the reports of peasants who told him that masses of the enemy's troops had entered the woods from the southward. Suddenly from the margin of the forest hostile artillery opened fire on the camp. Men were shot down as they rushed to arms. Horses of the artillery teams were killed as the gunners were harnessing them. The surprise was complete, and the battle that followed was a series of attempts to form something like a fighting line and stem for a while the victorious rush of the Germans. The 7th Corps was hustled back towards Mouzon with the loss of thousands killed, wounded, and prisoners, leaving 42 guns and much of its transport behind it. The survivors were for a while little better than a disorganized, dispirited mob, and as they crossed the river they brought confusion and disorganization into the ranks of other corps.

Next day MacMahon found that he was definitely headed off by the enemy's advance, and he began to retire westward. On the afternoon of August 31st

he halted at Sedan. He told the emperor and the generals that he would give his troops a day's rest on September 1st, and on the 2nd continue his retreat by Mézières.

MacMahon had a brilliant record of service in Algeria, the Crimea, and Italy, and the reputation of being a skilled as well as a daring leader of men. This makes it all the more difficult to understand his conduct of the brief campaign of the Châlons army. He seemed to be no longer the same man. It was strange that from first to last he appeared possessed by the idea that if he was to succeed, it must be by eluding and outmarching the Germans without fighting them. This was all the more remarkable because until the final battle he had no idea that they so largely outnumbered his own forces. One would have thought that he would have driven in the German cavalry screen, and rejoiced in the opportunity of making a dash at the heads of the enemy's columns, or that, when he found himself on the right bank of the Meuse with the enemy partly in his front, partly far away on the other bank, he would have tried to fight his way through by beating off those who barred his advance. But at this moment he seemed paralyzed by the disaster of Beaumont, and even when he drew back on the road to Mézières, instead of making every effort to effect his retreat as rapidly as might be, he halted in what was a hopeless position.

Sedan is a small manufacturing town. Within its walls and in the villages along the Meuse there

are a number of cloth factories. The town is traversed by the river, and surrounded by old fortifications planned by the celebrated Vauban in the days of Louis XIV. With the longer range of modern cannon the old citadel and the ramparts had long been useless for war; for from the surrounding heights the place could be commanded on all sides by hostile fire.

The heights north of the town form a kind of plateau, roughly V-shaped in general outline, with the opening of the V towards the town and the point at the hill above the village of Illy, crowned with a wayside cross and known in the narratives of the battle as the "Calvary of Illy." The plateau is furrowed by streams, and has in places detached clumps of wood. On its eastern side the Givonne brook runs through a deep valley. On the other side the plateau is bounded by the Floing valley. The Mézières road crosses this hollow, and at the hamlet of St. Albert passes through a narrow defile between the steep hills and a sharp bend of the Meuse. Northward the ground rises to the great forest of the Ardennes, through which runs the Belgian frontier line.

MacMahon, with his army halted on the Sedan plateau, was thus on a narrow stretch of ground between the Meuse and the frontier. Eastward the way was already barred by the German army; westward his road to safety lay by the defile of St. Albert. Strange to say, he never seems even to have thought of the necessity of securing this pass.

Orders were, however, given to blow up the bridge over the Meuse at Donchery beyond the defile. A party of engineers with tools and explosives left Sedan by the last train that got through to Mézières. At Donchery the party left the train, but it started again before they had taken out the tools and the gunpowder. Even then it does not seem to have occurred to any one that the train might be recalled. The bridge was left standing. No attempt was made to destroy the other bridge above Sedan near Bazeilles till it was too late. The French staff seem to have done all that was possible to facilitate the coming operations of the Germans.

When the invaders temporarily abandoned the advance on Paris and wheeled to the northward, the Army of the Meuse, moving on the right and slightly in advance of the 3rd Army, had got across the Meuse before MacMahon. The 3rd Army had pressed upon the flank of the French, and on the eve of Sedan was to the southward of the fortress on the left bank of the Meuse. As MacMahon retired upon Sedan on August 31st, the Saxon Prince, with the Meuse Army, followed him up, and in the afternoon received orders from Von Moltke to march at daybreak next morning from the eastward against the positions held by the French north of Sedan, sending his cavalry out on the right to prevent the enemy retiring by the woods into the neutral territory of Belgium.

At the same time the Prussian Crown Prince was directed to cross the Meuse below Sedan next day

with the greater part of his force and occupy the high ground about Vrigne-aux-Bois. He was to prevent the French army escaping westwards towards Mézières; no very serious task, for MacMahon's army would be moving by difficult roads in hilly country with the Meuse Army pressing on their rear. The two Bavarian corps of the Crown Prince's army were to seize the crossing of the river above Sedan and co-operate on this side with the attack of the Meuse Army. A large number of batteries were to be placed in position on the hills overlooking Sedan on the left bank. From this point their fire could search the French positions north of the place.

The 1st Bavarian Corps had moved down to the river opposite the village of Bazeilles in the afternoon, found the railway bridge still standing, seized it after a brief skirmish, and advanced against the southern side of Bazeilles. Here their advance was stopped by the marines of Lebrun's Corps. But the Bavarian batteries shelled the village and set several houses on fire.

At 9 p.m. Von Moltke sent another order to the Crown Prince. He feared that the French might begin their retreat under the cover of darkness, and he therefore directed the prince to cross at Donchery in the night, and be ready to move forward on the high ground beyond the river at daybreak. The German cavalry had already seized the bridge, which they found intact and undefended. A pontoon bridge was thrown across the river below it, and moving off before midnight the Crown Prince had

a considerable force massed on the farther bank at daybreak.

When Von Moltke wrote this final order he turned to the staff officer who was to ride off with it and said to him, "Now the trap is closed and the mouse is in it."

During the day MacMahon had told one of his generals that the enemy could not be more than 70,000 or 80,000 strong, that they were all to the eastward—that is, to the rearward of his intended movement—and that there was no doubt about the army easily reaching Mézières on September 2nd. The most he expected in the way of fighting was a rearguard action. As the troops reached the ground north of Sedan, two corps took up positions on the west side of the Givonne valley so as to be ready to bar the pursuit of the Germans—Ducrot with the 1st Corps on the heights above Daigny; Lebrun, with the 12th Corps on his left, holding the heights south of Daigny, and the large village of Bazeilles in the low ground near the Meuse. Douay with the 7th Corps had pushed on to the westward and halted on the flat-topped hills above Floing. The cavalry divisions were behind Douay's Corps, and close to Sedan lay the 5th Corps, hardly yet recovered from its rout of two days before. During the day General Wimpffen, who had joined the army on the 30th, produced an order from Palikao appointing him to the command of the 5th Corps and superseding the unlucky De Failly.

At half-past three in the afternoon the Bavarian

attack on Bazeilles had warned the marshal that he was not to be allowed by the enemy to have a day of rest for the army under the walls of Sedan. A little later an old soldier, who lived near Donchery, came in with news that masses of the enemy were moving on the south bank of the river. MacMahon held an informal council of war. He appears still to have failed to realize his danger, and instead of taking prompt measures for securing the line of retreat westwards by St. Albert and Vrigne-aux-Bois and barring the river crossing below the town, all that was done was to make arrangements for defending the ground on which the army had halted. Douay pointed out that he was not strong enough to hold the west side of the position from Floing to Illy, and Wimpffen was directed to reinforce his line with a division of the 5th Corps. Probably because he still persisted in his belief that the enemy was not in force, the marshal awaited the coming battle in the blind confidence of optimist ignorance. He had no idea that he was outnumbered two to one, and that while he slept that night the Germans were already closing his one doubtful way to safety.

The night was fine and warm, with hardly a breath of wind, and as the dawn came a dense haze covered all the lower ground. Before sunrise the old King of Prussia was in the saddle. He rode from his headquarters at Vendresse to the heights between the villages of Frenois and Wadelincourt. He had with him a mounted escort and a numerous staff, and several foreign officers and war correspondents.

Among these privileged spectators was the American General Sheridan and his aide-de-camp Colonel Forsyth. Beside the king rode the three men who were the makers of the German Empire—the Chancellor, Von Bismarck, in his white cuirassier uniform; the War Minister, Von Roon; and the "organizer of victory," Von Moltke. Battery after battery of the Bavarian 2nd Corps came clattering up the hill and unlimbered with the muzzles pointing northward, but the haze still hid their destined targets. But out of the mist on the right towards Bazeilles came the sharp crackle of musketry and the jarring blasts of the French machine-guns. Von der Tann with the 1st Bavarian Corps was hard at it with Lebrun's marines.

As the sun rose higher the mists cleared, and from the king's position on the hilltop the battlefield was spread out like a panorama. Below the steep slope in front ran the Meuse, with the railway line and road beside it. To the left Sedan lay, a huddle of white houses and big factories, with the high church tower rising above them, the old ramparts and ditches girdling it round, and the tricolour flying from the citadel. Beyond, the hills rose in a long slope to the dark woods of the Ardennes—hills furrowed with deep valleys, dotted with clumps of wood, with the village church towers marking out the chief points. Telescope and field-glass showed plainly where the French were posted.

So far the only fighting was at Bazeilles, where the dense fog of white powder smoke and the darker smoke

of burning houses showed the fight was hot. Away to the westward the Crown Prince's Corps were pouring northward from Donchery. They had marched in the night, and already would soon close the way on that side and then come into action with Douay's corps. Eastward, still hidden by the woods beyond the Givonne valley, the Crown Prince of Saxony was advancing with the Army of the Meuse to attack the east front of MacMahon's positions. The Saxon prince had massed his horsemen on the right. Then came the Prussian Guards, then his own Saxons of the 12th Corps, and next the 4th, men of the central German lands of the middle Elbe, Thuringia, and the Saxon borders.

The first shot had been fired at 4.30 a.m. near Bazeilles, and for some hours the only fighting was round the village. The Germans had brought several batteries into action against it on both sides of the river, and along the south front of the place there was a fierce struggle. The fight swayed backwards and forwards, as the Bavarians pressed into the streets and gardens, were driven out, and renewed their attack. The villagers, encouraged by their curé, joined in the defence with a variety of weapons from rifles to shot-guns. It was only with heavy loss that the invaders at last gained a footing in the south part of the place. Their attempts to work round it to the eastwards were checked by Lebrun's men, aided by some of Ducrot's batteries thrown forward to the high ground east of Daigny. In this local engagement the French were at first undoubtedly successful.

But while this struggle for the village was in progress important events had occurred. MacMahon had ridden out of Sedan just before 5 a.m. He rode towards the fight by the high ground above the Balan-Bazeilles road. According to his own account, he meant to see for himself what was happening, and then decide whether to continue the resistance or order a retreat. But he also admits in the same note on the day of Sedan that he had still no idea that the Army of the Meuse was moving against his positions from the eastward. On the heights above La Moncelle he came under the fire of the German batteries on the other side of the Givonne. A shell exploded close to him. One fragment of it lodged in his thigh, another broke the fore leg of his horse, which fell with him. At first he thought he was only slightly wounded, but as he tried to rise he fainted. When he revived he felt that he could do no more, and he told his chief of the staff to send word to Ducrot that he was badly wounded and had transferred the command to him. The first officer who rode off to look for Ducrot was himself put out of action by a wound of which he died. A second message, dispatched later, reached Ducrot shortly before 7 a.m.

General Ducrot says in his narrative of the day that he had not seen the marshal since August 30th, and had received no information or orders from him. But he had made up his mind that the only hope for the army lay in a prompt retreat to Mézières, and the halt before Sedan had made him all the more anxious

because he had already marked as the danger-point that must be passed at the earliest possible moment the narrow gap between the bend of the Meuse at Iges and the Belgian frontier, a space of less than three miles, which he felt sure the Germans would try to close. He knew the enemy was in force on the left bank of the river, and messages from the mayors of villages to the eastward had warned him of another army moving towards Sedan from that direction on the right bank of the Meuse.

As soon as he was informed that he had become commander-in-chief he acted on the idea that he had been thinking out for the last two days. He at once issued orders for a general retirement, the first stage in which was to be the massing of the army on the heights above Illy. He then hoped to march by the hill tracks along the edge of the forest of the Ardennes and gain the Mézières road beyond Vrigne-aux-Bois. Lebrun's Corps was to act as a rearguard and keep off the pursuit of the Bavarians. The dangerous gap north of the bend of the Meuse at Iges was not yet closed; the Army of the Meuse had not yet come into action to the eastward. He believed that although there would still be some hard fighting he could get through, crossing the front of the Crown Prince's advance and holding back the pursuit.

The weak point of the scheme was that there were no good roads in the direction by which he would have to move, and the tracks of the forest mostly led not east and west, but northwards into Belgium.

But Ducrot always maintained that if he had been allowed to carry out his movement, there might have been heavy loss, convoys and batteries might have had to be abandoned; but the catastrophe of Sedan would have been avoided, and some 60,000 saved from the wreck would have reached Mézières and then retired on Paris. At the very worst the army would have taken refuge in Belgium.

He communicated his orders personally to Lebrun. The commander of the 12th Corps, feeling he was holding his own against the Bavarians, was reluctant to obey, and argued the point; but Ducrot insisted, and the retirement from Bazeilles began, and simultaneously the troops of the 1st Corps thrown out in front of Daigny began to fall back. The withdrawal from Bazeilles was delayed by the necessity of maintaining what was now a rearguard action with its assailants. The French marines were very reluctant to let go the houses and barricades they held, and the villagers had no idea of giving up the fight. It was therefore very slowly that the Bavarians pressed forward. On the left of the village the retirement was more rapid, and the Germans were soon in possession of the ground up to the Givonne and the hamlet of La Moncelle. During these slow beginnings of the retirement the right and centre of the Meuse Army began to reach the heights east of the Givonne. Some of the 12th (Saxon) Corps were already in action. The Guard arrived at Villers Cernay, and sent its batteries galloping forward to the crest of the slopes in front. The Saxon

artillery began to come into line on their left opposite Daigny. On the other side of the battlefield the head of the long column formed by the main body of the Crown Prince's army was coming through the defile of St. Albert, and detachments of his troops were securing the high ground north of it.

If the French were to effect their retreat, not a moment was to be lost. Ducrot was watching the movement from the high ground above Daigny when a staff officer brought him a note hurriedly written in pencil and signed by General Wimpffen. It ran thus :—

"The enemy is falling back on our right. I am sending Grandchamp's Division to Lebrun. I think there ought to be no question of our retiring at this moment. I hold a letter from the Minister of War giving me the command of the army, but we will talk of this after the battle. You are nearer the enemy than I am. Use all your energy and knowledge to gain a victory over an enemy who is in a disadvantageous position. Therefore while taking care of the line entrusted to you, support Lebrun vigorously."

Ducrot was thunderstruck. De Wimpffen was taking the command out of his hands, and at the same time sending him orders that showed the most absolute delusion as to the real position of affairs. Presently De Wimpffen rode up, and Ducrot tried to persuade him to withdraw his order. It was evident that the new commander had the strange idea that only the Bavarian attack on Bazeilles need be considered. To Ducrot's suggestion that the Germans were moving to cut the line of retreat he replied, "You are exaggerating the difficulty.

There are only some small detachments of the enemy on that side." But Ducrot asked him if he was not aware that masses of Germans were also moving through the country to the eastward, marching on Illy. "If they once seize Illy the position is hopeless," said Ducrot. "Illy—where or what is Illy?" asked Wimpffen. Ducrot, one of the few officers who had a map, opened it and pointed to the height where a few hours later the two arms of the enveloping German movement united and closed the ring of fire and steel round the doomed Army of Châlons. Wimpffen refused to argue. He told Ducrot what they had to do was "to throw the Bavarians into the Meuse." "I shall go to Carignan, not to Mézières," he said; "we don't want a retreat, we need a victory." "We shall be lucky if we manage a retreat," replied Ducrot, and rode away to obey what he rightly regarded as a fatal order.

So in less than three hours the unfortunate army had three commanders in succession. Ducrot certainly showed no lack of zeal in obeying. He stopped the retreat and personally directed a counter-attack which for a while recovered some of the lost ground. Lebrun recaptured most of Bazeilles. Ducrot flung a division across the Givonne near Daigny, and his Zouaves and linesmen came on with such a dash that the Germans gave way, and several of their batteries went galloping back to the shelter of the woods. But the Guard and the Saxons were now coming rapidly into action, and before the steady fire of their guns and the advance of their

dense firing lines the French were gradually driven back again over the Givonne.

In and around the burning village of Bazeilles there was desperate fighting at close quarters, but along the heights east of the Givonne valley the Germans for a while were chiefly busy bringing battery after battery into line, and shelling not only the positions immediately in their front, but also the interior of the plateau held by the French. Some of their shells fell in the rear of Douay's Corps on the western side of the position, and blew up artillery wagons behind the French batteries. Some of the gunners of the Prussian Guard took for their target a mass of horsemen on the height by the Calvary of Illy—Marguérite's splendid brigade of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. These suffered such loss that they had to seek shelter behind the wood of La Garenne.

Douay's Corps, with the German shells bursting in its rear and others coming in on its flank from the opposite side of the river, now came under an ever-increasing artillery fire from the front. The Crown Prince's army was issuing from the undefended defile of St. Albert and streaming out upon the heights north of Iges. The first comers were fired on by a horse battery pushed out in front of Floing, but it was soon driven in by several batteries on the heights near Menges, and firing lines of infantry came running forward towards Floing village. To Douay's message that he was attacked in force, Wimpffen replied with a written note in which he said: "I think it is a mere demonstration against your corps intended

to prevent you sending help to the 1st and 12th Corps," and he ordered him to reinforce Lebrun with any troops he could spare.

Ignorance of the reality could hardly go further. Douay sent a galloper to the new commander-in-chief asking him to "come and see for himself." Wimpffen rode over to the plateau above Floing. He saw a sight that at last somewhat shook his optimism. "I saw," he says, "a hostile army extending afar, and a formidable artillery firing with a precision that under other circumstances I should have been the first to admire." From the slopes behind Menges northwards the hills bristled with artillery, and fresh batteries were coming into action. Their fire was already mastering that of Douay's artillery. The French gunners were working under a storm of bursting shells. Broken wheels, men and horses struck down, limber-boxes and wagons blowing up, showed how true and deadly was the enemy's aim. In front of Floing an infantry attack was developing. After calling up some reinforcements from the 7th Corps, Wimpffen rode back to the right.

Bazeilles had been taken. At eleven o'clock the brave garrison gave way, not before the direct attack, but under the pressure of the German advance from the left across the Givonne. Even after the marines let go their hold of the burning village handfuls of men still fought on in isolated houses. A château on its north-western edge was only taken after artillery had shattered it at close range. In a

wine shop, a cottage near the Balan road, a few officers and men fought on till they had literally fired the last cartridge. The house, riddled by bullets and shell, is still kept as it was at the close of the day as a memorial of the fight, and De Neuville's famous picture of the men searching for the "last cartridges" among the dead and dying has immortalized the incident.

By noon nearly 500 guns were sending a converging fire into the French positions from east, west, and south. Along the Givonne there was a fierce infantry fight in progress, and working round the blazing wreck of Bazeilles by openings hurriedly made in fence and wall by the pioneers the Bavarian attack was pressing on towards Balan. The German lines to east and west were gradually extending northwards, but there was still a gap open north of Illy. Through this a few guns, some hundreds of horse, and some thousands of linesmen and Zouaves streamed northwards in driblets. Some were in flight, others drifted away in this direction from sheer ignorance of the ground, as they shifted their positions under the searching fire of the enemy's artillery. Some formed bodies were deliberately led northwards by officers who had decided that to remain longer was to be made prisoners, and who hoped still to fight for France. That they were in earnest is shown by the fact that a considerable number reached Mézières and other northern fortresses by the forest tracks, and afterwards joined the Paris garrison. Some of these fugitives escaped by making a short cut through

Belgian territory, but most of those who crossed the border were disarmed by the frontier guard of the Belgian army.

As the jaws of the converging attack were thus closing on the French position, Wimpffen once more met Ducrot, who could not forbear saying to him, "What I foretold is happening even sooner than I expected. Douay is badly shaken. The enemy is moving against the Calvary of Illy. Moments are precious. You must hurry up reinforcements if we are to keep that position." "Look after it yourself," said Wimpffen; "I must help Lebrun."

Ducrot, moving up some of the 1st Corps and a regiment of De Marguérite's Chasseurs d'Afrique towards the northern angle of the plateau, organized the defence. By this time there were signs that the end was coming. Large numbers of wounded were straggling back from both fronts seeking shelter in the hollows of the ground and in the woods, and with them were crowds of unwounded fugitives. The Bois de la Garenne was filled with a disorganized mob. Ducrot himself steadied and moved up to the front a regiment he found retiring in confusion. It was nearly two o'clock. One of the Crown Prince's regiments, advancing through the wooded ground north of Illy, had met the hussars of the Prussian Guard coming from the eastward. The circle was closed.

The first line of German skirmishers that crowned the height above Illy was driven back by a charge of the Chasseurs d'Afrique, but they in turn were

sent back with many empty saddles by formed bodies of troops advancing in support. Round the Calvary the French infantry held on for a while, but a storm of shells from front and both flanks shook them terribly, and before a rush of the attack they gave way. Marguérite had already moved his brigade of cavalry from its position behind the Bois de la Garenne towards Douay's left. Ducrot, seeing Illy lost, and the infantry attack now developing rapidly against Douay, most of whose batteries were silenced, sent word to Marguérite that he had better charge the attacking infantry to give some respite during which the defence might be reorganized.

Then came an incident that did something to save the honour of the French arms. De Marguérite moved his splendid squadrons to the crest of the slopes above Floing, and as they formed for the charge, himself rode forward to reconnoitre the ground. Suddenly he dropped on the neck of his horse—clinging to the mane. He had been shot through the head. Two troopers dashed out and supported him as he rode back, just able to tell his second in command, De Gallifet, to take his place. De Marguérite, the hero of many a desert raid, was loved by his men, and as the trumpets sounded the charge they rode forward in a fury of vengeful rage.

Archibald Forbes, who watched the charge, tells how the thousand horsemen wheeled into lines of squadrons under a terrible fire as accurately as if they were at some great review. Then down the

slope they thundered, scattering the first firing line of German Jägers, and sabring many of them. But volleys fired at close quarters by the supports broke the rush, and strewed the ground with men and horses. Some of the squadrons turned back; but others pressed on, raged round the bristling bayonets of rallying groups, dashed into an advanced battery, and only gave up the attempt when their ranks were fairly torn to fragments by the deadly cross-fire that swept down upon them.

As the remnant of the charge rode back most of Douay's Corps was retiring in confusion. One division kept together and prolonged the fight for a while among the quarries and ridges between the Floing crest and Sedan. Northwards the German guns were being dragged up the slopes of Illy. The line of the Givonne had been lost, and there was a confused fight in the wood of La Garenne and the valley by its southern margin. The Bavarians had taken Balan, but there was still a fight on the slopes above it. A confused mass of men, horses, guns, and wagons crowded the ground north of the town, and streamed into its streets and into the wide ditches of the old fortress. In the broken mob Bonnemain's cuirassier division had been swept away, only a few squadrons breaking off and charging out towards the Floing valley in the desperate hope of cutting their way through.

On the remnant of the fighting lines, on the mass of fugitives, and on the town itself the grim circle of German guns rained destruction.

The emperor had ridden out with some staff officers in the morning to share the dangers of the fight, which he could not venture to direct. He was no longer the man of Solferino, but broken by the painful malady that made it agony for him to ride, and utterly dispirited, he was little more than a spectator of the downfall of his life-work. He had met the party that was carrying back the wounded marshal in the early morning, and then for some hours he watched the fight from the hill above Balan under a fire that killed and wounded some of his escort. When he saw the circle of hostile fire close all round his doomed army, he rode back to Sedan, and about three o'clock, telling his officers that something must be done to stop "this useless slaughter," he ordered the white flag to be displayed from the citadel. It seems to have flown for some time unnoticed by any one. Then Lebrun arrived at the Prefecture to tell him that everywhere the defence was collapsing.

The emperor said to the general he had already decided that the time had come for surrender. Lebrun explained that it would be necessary to send out an officer with a flag of truce and a document authorizing him to ask for an armistice. A note was hastily written, and Lebrun, with a trumpeter and a white flag, rode towards Balan. As he cleared the broken mob outside the town he met Wimpffen, who tore the white flag from the orderly's hands and exclaimed, "I will have no surrender. We must break out." Lebrun asked for orders. Wimp-

ffen said he had sent a message to the emperor asking him to join in the last effort. He asked Lebrun to help him to get some men together and make a dash towards Balan. It was a hopeless attempt from the first. A couple of thousand men followed the two generals, but only for a few hundred yards. Then they broke away under a sudden storm of hostile fire from Balan and from beyond the river. Wimpffen and Lebrun found themselves alone, and turning rode back towards Sedan.

Before they reached it the German fire died down rapidly and then utterly ceased. The white flag on the citadel had at last been seen through the smoke clouds, and one of the Prussian King's staff, Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf (afterwards Chancellor of the German Empire), was riding down towards the Torcy gate of Sedan with a flag of truce to summon the place. To his utter surprise, on arrival he was brought into the presence of the emperor. The Germans had no idea that Napoleon was with the beaten army. Shortly before, General Sheridan had remarked to Bismarck that probably the emperor would be taken with his army. "No, no," said the chancellor. "The old fox is too wary for that. He has slipped away to Paris long since."

But now after an hour of waiting the king and his companions on the hilltop saw Von Schellendorf spurring wildly up towards them. As he drew near he shouted, "*Der Kaiser ist da!*" (The emperor is there). It was great news. It might mean the

end of the war. The colonel brought back a letter from Napoleon personally surrendering himself to the king, and proposals that French commissioners should meet the German chiefs to discuss the terms of a capitulation.

There is no need to tell the story of the efforts made by the French generals to secure some better terms than absolute surrender. To their protests that they could still make the Germans pay dearly for their success Von Moltke grimly replied that they were helpless. Five hundred guns already pointed their muzzles on the narrow space where lay the wreck of the last army of France. Two hundred more would soon be in position, for at the close of the fight the Germans had hundreds of guns and tens of thousands of men that had not yet fired a shot. At dawn, if the French had not surrendered at discretion, those 700 guns would open fire. It would be a mere slaughter. The Frenchmen had to bow to the inevitable.

Early on September 2nd the capitulation was signed, and the emperor and his army became prisoners, 82,000 men laying down their arms, and among the trophies of the victory were 419 guns, besides the 139 cannon of the old fortress. About 8,000 men had escaped to the northern fortresses or surrendered to the Belgians. German accounts placed the French losses in the actual fighting at 17,000 killed and wounded. But the figure appears to be an exaggeration. The French staff history of the war, which enumerates the loss of every unit engaged, states that

799 officers were killed or wounded, and 9,035 men; but it includes in the losses of the fight 8,347 men missing (*disparus*), which would make up a total of 17,000 if added to the killed and wounded. Now this last figure (8,347) is very nearly what appears also to be the total of those who escaped to the northern fortresses or surrendered to the Belgians. Some of those, who thus made their way northward before the iron circle closed, had already been wounded or were shot down by German patrols in the forest. But these would at most add a few hundreds to the day's casualties. The French loss was probably a little over 10,000 killed and wounded. It was less than one would have expected, but one must remember that the circumstances under which loss is suffered can increase its effect: a large part of this loss was inflicted in less than three hours, when the German artillery had mastered the fire of the French batteries, and the infantry, already dispirited and convinced that victory was hopeless, found themselves penned in a circle of deadly fire to which they could make no effective reply. The Germans, except at Bazeilles, made the fight an artillery attack. Their fire was fearfully effective. The French found themselves exposed to a fierce bombardment from many sides at once. Archibald Forbes tells how, as he rode up to Douay's position after the battle, he saw the ground strewn with headless, dismembered, and disembowelled corpses—a sight to make him sick. It was when they found themselves helpless under this fire that so many of the French regi-

ments gave way and became disorganized mobs. In the last stage of the fight some of the German batteries on the northern side were able to gallop forward in front of their infantry and shell the flying French at close quarters, so complete was the breakdown of all resistance.

Fighting under such conditions the Germans had won a fairly easy victory. Of their army of over 150,000 men, they had brought into action not quite a half. Of their 20,000 cavalry, not a thousand drew swords during the fight; 70,000 of the infantry were brought up to the front, but even of these many thousands never fired a shot. But of their 700 guns nearly 600 were in action by the end of the day, or actually ready to open fire if the fight had continued. At least 500 had been engaged in the bombardment of the French positions.

The loss of the victors was 8,202 killed and wounded. The heaviest part of it was incurred in the hard fighting at close quarters in and around Bazeilles. The Bavarians, who bore the brunt of the fight here, lost 3,876 officers and men, nearly half the total loss of the Germans in the whole battle. The Guard Corps, which fought chiefly with its batteries, lost only 434 men.

But as our narrative has shown, the battle was lost by the French before the first shot was fired. The only question was what would be the extent of the disaster. The last chance of evading a wholesale surrender disappeared when Wimpffen took the command out of Ducrot's hands. "Ordre,

contreordre, desordre," runs the French proverb, and "orders, counter-orders, and the consequent disorder" marked the French conduct of the hopeless fight. With the 1st Army of Imperial France shut up in Metz and the 2nd taken in Von Moltke's trap at Sedan, all that was left for Frenchmen was to disavow the empire that had gone down in disaster, and fight for a while with improvised armies in the brave hope of saving the honour of the French arms even in the midst of such widespread ruin.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE GREAT ASSAULT ON PLEVNA.

*September* 11 *and* 12, 1877.

THE costly failure of the first attack of the German Guard on St. Privat made the day of Gravelotte an epoch in military history, for it was that terrible experience which at last brought home to scientific soldiers the fact that such attacks in mass were murderous and useless, and led to the adoption of the modern forms of attack in extended firing lines, backed up by supports also advancing in line once the region of effective fire is reached.

The war of 1877–78 between Russia and Turkey enforced another lesson. Osman Pasha's defence of Plevna showed in the most striking way the value of improvised earthworks held by determined men armed with the new rifle. The experiences of Plevna further confirmed the growing belief in the high value of entrenchments thrown up so as to correspond to the tactical necessities of the moment, as compared with permanent and more costly fortifications.

Plevna was an open town in Bulgaria, among the hills on the northern slope of the Balkans, and about

nineteen miles south of the Danube. It became world-famous almost by an accident. The first operations of the Russians in the campaign of Bulgaria had been uniformly successful. They forced the crossing of the Danube at Sistova. Abdul Kerim, the old pasha who commanded the Turkish army about Shumla, gave them very little trouble, and they were able to send a flying column under General Gourko across the Balkans by the Shipka Pass into Roumelia. Every one was talking of an immediate march on Adrianople. In the middle of July General Krudener, after reducing Nicopolis on the Danube by a two days' bombardment, sent forward General Schildner-Schuldner with one of his divisions to occupy Plevna, as a prelude to opening another pass over the Balkans west of the Shipka.

All unknown to the Russians, Osman Pasha, the military governor of Widdin, had marched eastward with about 14,000 men and 58 guns. He reached Plevna on July 19th. He intended to use the place as a starting-point for operations against the flank of the Russian advance, keeping a line of retreat over the Balkans open behind him. The very next day, July 20th, Schildner-Schuldner, with nine battalions, 46 guns, and some Cossack cavalry, approached Plevna, without even sending a handful of Cossack scouts in advance. To his utter surprise he was fired upon by rifles and artillery, and after an ill-directed attempt to fight his way into the town, was beaten off with serious loss, and retired on Nicopolis. This was the first battle of Plevna. It

now became a point of honour with the Russians to avenge the defeat and turn Osman out of the place. The pasha brought up reinforcements, and began to throw up entrenchments.

Krudener was ordered to capture Plevna, and on July 30th attacked it with 32,500 men and 170 guns. Osman had been working night and day throwing up earthworks on the hills east of the town. They were of the simplest construction—lines of shelter trenches and square redoubts, the latter having a low rampart and shallow ditch, not unlike the bank and ditch of a field. The largest, near the village of Grivitza, was about 200 yards square. But these simple and apparently feeble works were well placed. Each of them had a good clear field of fire to a considerable distance down the slopes. They were armed with cannon, but their best defence proved to be the long-ranging, quick-firing rifles of the men who held them. The rifle was a good one—the American Peabody, very like the Martini. There was abundance of ammunition, and recesses for handy reserves of cartridges had been made by placing boxes, opening outwards, in holes dug inside the earthwork parapets of trench and redoubt.

Krudener made two disconnected attacks from the east and south-east. He actually took two of the redoubts, but he was driven out again, and retreated with heavy loss. No less than 169 officers and 7,136 men (or nearly 25 per cent. of his force) were killed or wounded. He reported that he had been opposed by 50,000 men. Osman really had

only 20,000, a large proportion of them irregulars; and only 58 cannon, some of them small mountain guns, to oppose to Krudener's 170 field-pieces. This was the second battle of Plevna. Osman was now famous, and the Russians were more determined than ever that, cost what it might, the little Bulgarian town that had suddenly grown into a fortress must be taken. All the plans of the campaign were thrown to the winds. The Czar, the grand dukes, and the generals thought only of Plevna.

In the first days of August Osman received reinforcements that raised his strength to 35,000 men, with 70 guns. He pushed out a division under Adil Pasha to Loftcha, to the south-east of Plevna, near the opening of the Tröian Pass over the Balkans, to keep open his communications with the capital. For their next attack the Russians concentrated an army of 95,000 men (including 10,500 cavalry), with 452 guns, many of them siege pieces of heavy calibre. The nominal command was given to the ally of Russia, Prince (afterwards King) Charles of Roumania, 30,000 of whose army helped to make up the attacking force. The real director of the operations was his chief of the staff, the Russian general Zotoff. The large force of cavalry was intended to assist in investing the place completely on all sides. The hundreds of guns were to prepare the way for the assault by a bombardment of several days' duration. As a prelude to the attack, Prince Imeritinski's Corps, with which the famous young General Skobeleff was acting as second in command, attacked and

captured Loftcha on September 3rd, thus cutting Osman off from his line of supply over the Balkans. Adil Pasha then retired into Plevna.

The Russo-Roumanian army had now closed in upon Plevna on all sides. On September 6th the batteries were ready to open fire against the place, and the bombardment of the defence works began. The Russian staff had arranged that, as soon as the bombardment had produced some effect, there should be three simultaneous attacks on the works. On the west, the Roumanians were to advance against the Grivitza redoubts; on the south-east front, General Kryloff was to attack the line of entrenchments about Omar Tabia with the 4th and 9th Army Corps; on the south-west, Skobeleff was to advance by the Green Hills and the village of Brestovetz, and assault the four redoubts grouped about Yunuz Tabia. The Czar himself was to be present to witness the great assault and capture of Plevna, and with him came a crowd of grand dukes, foreign military attachés, and journalists of all nations.

For four days the hundreds of Russian guns thundered against Osman's entrenchments. The tempest of fire and steel looked very terrible to those who watched it, and it was thought that the Turks must be suffering fearful losses, and that they would be soon reduced to a condition of demoralized panic. It is strange how this confidence of soldiers in the efficacy of bombardment lives on after a century of failures. The tons of shells thrown into Plevna caused comparatively small losses. The

Turks kept close to the protecting parapets of their entrenchments, and waited quietly for the time when the infantry would come on and they would have something to do. They were more incommoded by the steady downpour of cold rain that began on September 6th and continued for a week. It soaked them to the skin, sent many into hospital, and made the interior of the works into miserable quagmires. The few shells that made fair hits on the parapets did not damage them seriously. The explosion only shifted a quantity of earth, and an hour of spade work after dark set it right again. The Turks even succeeded in keeping a good many guns in action. The Omar Tabia redoubt and the batteries near it steadily answered back the 24 huge siege-guns which Kryloff had in position on the Radischevo ridge. On the 10th the Turkish shells set Radischevo village on fire, and it blazed for twelve hours, lighting up the country around with its red glare all through the night.

Skobeleff, to whom Imeritinski had given the command of the 2nd Division and the 3rd Rifle Brigade, had driven the Turks from Brestovetz, and the wooded heights near it known to the Russians as the "Green Hills." From the ground thus won the Yumuz Tabia group of redoubts was bombarded at short range. Skobeleff believed the Turks were badly shaken, and spoke confidently of being able to rush them and fight his way into Plevna. Imeritinski left him the leadership of the attack. Skobeleff was the idol of the Russian soldiers. He had won his

rank of general four years before in Central Asia, when he was only thirty-two. Recklessly brave, he was one of those men who have the power of inspiring thousands with their own enthusiasm. He had some of the love of theatrical display that distinguished Napoleon's famous cavalry leader, Joachim Murat. In the fight for the Green Hills, Skobeleff rode with the assaulting column, mounted on a white horse, and dressed in a brilliant uniform, with a diamond brooch holding the aigrette in his white sheepskin cap. Such a figure must have been the mark of many rifles, but he was never wounded in battle. His right-hand man in all the operations at Lofteha and Plevna was a young staff officer for whom a brilliant career was predicted—Captain Kuropatkin, the future commander-in-chief of the Russian armies in the war with Japan.

On September 10th the reports of the engineer and artillery commanders assured the staff that all was ready for the great assault, and the capture of Plevna was fixed for the afternoon of next day. The batteries were to redouble their efforts from sunrise till 3 p.m. Then the storming columns were to rush the Turkish redoubts and trenches. The fact that the time of the advance was fixed so late in the autumn day as to leave only a few short hours of daylight, is proof enough that the Russian staff counted on a rapid and easy victory.

As the sun rose the batteries of the attack opened fire, and for hours the shells fell in showers along the north, east, and south fronts. On the west, beyond the river Vid, 10,000 horsemen were posted to watch

that side of the entrenched camp of Osman. On the north the Roumanians were to make a mere demonstration, to keep the garrison employed on that side. East and south the troops for the attack were formed up in lines of company columns. The day was dark and gloomy; from cloudy skies there came down a deluge of cold rain, and as there was no wind masses of damp fog and mist mingled with the clouds of powder smoke, and limited the view.

The orders were to attack at 3, but at 1 p.m. there was a lull in the bombardment. It was apparently the result partly of a delay in bringing up fresh supplies of powder and shell to the batteries, partly of the difficulty the gunners experienced in finding their targets in the thick atmosphere. Two regiments of the 4th Corps on the Radischevo ridge, the Ugla and Yaroslav Regiments, three battalions each—in all about 5,000 men—took the sudden halting of the fire as an indication that the moment had come for the assault, and dashed forward against the Omar Tabia works. Once a premature attack was made it would have been sounder policy for Kryloff to support it, but he stuck to the letter of his orders. Not another man was to move forward till three o'clock. So the six unfortunate battalions of Ugla and Yaroslav fought single-handed, while their comrades looked on. Again and again they flung themselves against the redoubt. Its Turkish garrison, three battalions in Omar Tabia and the trenches right and left of it, crouched low against the parapets, and firing as rapidly as deft fingers

could handle bolt and trigger, swept the slope in front with a hail of bullets. As they came into the fire-swept zone the Russians went down like grass under a scythe. They fell back more than once, only to rally and come on again. When at last they gave up the attempt, and the broken battalions straggled back to the Radischevo ridge, they had left nearly half their numbers on the ground—2,300 men killed and wounded out of 5,000.

At 3 p.m. the general assault began, and Kryloff moved forward over the death-strewn ground. For two hours regiment after regiment was hurled against Omar Tabia, but not a man ever got within a hundred yards of it. Twenty-one battalions were engaged from first to last, but the rifle fire of the three battalions opposed to them held them at bay. Six thousand dead and wounded were heaped on the ground in front of the works when at 5 p.m. Kryloff decided that further attempts were useless. The Turks had lost a few hundreds only, chiefly by shell fire from the batteries that covered the assault, the garrison being unable to take cover so effectually while repelling the attack.

While the Russian centre was failing thus disastrously, the right attack near Grivitza village had scored a partial success. Here the assault was made by the Roumanians, supported by a division of Krudener's Corps (the 9th). The objective of this attack was the projecting angle of the works, formed by the two enclosures of low green mounds that stood, about three hundred yards apart, at the top of the

slope of meadowland west of Grivitza village. Three simultaneous attacks were directed against the nearest of the works, the "Grivitza Redoubt No. 1" of the histories of the siege, known in Turkish narratives as Kanli Tabia (that is, "the Bloody Fort"), an appropriate name considering how much blood was shed around it. The Roumanian prince formed up three storming columns—on the left, against the south side of the works, Krudener's Russians; in front and on the right his own Roumanians. At three o'clock these converging attacks were pushed forward, but only to fall back before the leaden hail that swept the slopes, the right attack suffering most under the cross-fire from No. 2 Redoubt. The attack was re-formed and went on again, and again it was hurled back from the insignificant-looking mounds that topped the slope.

At five o'clock, when the firing was dying away on the Russian centre, Prince Charles tried once more. He had drawn reinforcements of fresh troops from the Roumanian divisions facing the north front of Plevna. This time the stormers reached the redoubt, surged over its shallow ditch and low rampart, and fought with crossed bayonets for possession. The Turks made a desperate struggle to hold on, but the masses of stormers that poured up the slope simply hustled them out of the redoubt. Attempts were then made to charge across the 300 yards of ground that separated the captured work from Redoubt No. 2. But these all failed. Still something had been done. When the sun went down the Rou-

manian colours were flying victoriously over the "Bloody Fort," and the engineers and gunners were bringing up artillery and digging trenches to ensure the security of this hard-won conquest. Its capture had cost the loss of nearly 4,000 men—two-thirds Roumanians, the rest Russians.

On the extreme left, north of the Green Hills, Skobeleff had been fighting in fierce battle against a young Turkish general whose energy and magical power of command was like his own—Yunuz Pasha, who gave his name to one of the south-western redoubts, where he had his headquarters.

Before three o'clock Skobeleff had formed up his assaulting column among the woods and vineyards near Brestovetz, ready to move forward at the signal. It was composed of eight battalions, the famous regiments of Vladimir and Suzdal, and the 9th and 10th Rifles. The regiments had their bands of drums and bugles at their head, and their colours displayed. Skobeleff, in all his parade finery, was mounted on his white horse, with a standard-bearer riding beside him. It looked like a peace review. At three the regiments swung out of the woods to the strains of martial music, deployed into lines of company columns, and moved upon Yunuz Tabia, which, with the three other redoubts forming the group, looked down from the crest of a slope on the other side of a grassy hollow traversed by a stream.

Just beyond this stream the advance was stopped by the deadly fire of the Turkish rifles. In vain the batteries tried to keep down the enemy's rapid

fusillade. Lines of skirmishers thrown forward to answer it crumbled away under the leaden hail. Wounded and unwounded men began to straggle to the rear. It looked like a miserable failure.

In the thick of the fire Skobeleff rode, seeming to have a charmed life. Suddenly he saw a new possibility. Kuropatkin was sent off at full gallop to bring up the reserves—five battalions, the Libau Regiment of the line and the 11th and 12th Rifles. As these came up Skobeleff put himself at their head, and inclining to the right dashed round the flank of the half-broken line of the first attack, and up the slope, not for Yunuz Tabia, but for the two redoubts to its left rear, and between it and Plevna. These works of the second line were not so strongly held. Skobeleff fought his way into first one and then the other of them. He was between Yunuz and the town.

There were signs that he had friends there. The Bulgarians in Plevna had risen on the Turks. There was fighting in the streets, and great columns of smoke and flame rose up as the rioters fired some of the Turkish magazines of corn and forage. Osman had to use some of his force to suppress this outbreak, and at the same time hurried reinforcements from the north front, which concentrated under the command of his lieutenant, Rifaat Pasha, among the vineyards near the two inner redoubts at the south-western end of the town.

It was well for the Turks that the Russian staff had an exaggerated idea of the numerical strength

of Osman's army; otherwise at this moment the Roumanians might have rushed the north front of Plevna. The whole long line on that side was held by only four battalions. For Osman had made up his mind that the enemy did not mean to attack in that direction, and had stripped the works of men in order to meet the pressing danger from the south-west.

Rifaat made a desperate assault on the captured redoubts; but Skobeleff held his own, and as the sun went down the Turks fell back on the town with considerable losses and with their commander badly wounded. During the night Skobeleff's men had no rest. They were fired upon from three sides, and were kept busy repair ng the works and digging trenches on their flanks. Some reinforcements and supplies of ammunition reached them during the anxious hours of darkness. They knew that in the morning they would have to face a furious assault, for at any cost Osman would have to try to turn Skobeleff out of the ground he had won in the very heart of the position, and re-establish communication with Yunuz in the two outlying redoubts, now cut off from the town.

Skobeleff's best chance was that the Russians and Roumanians would renew a general assault on Plevna on the morning of the 12th, and thus make it impossible for Osman to concentrate any considerable force against him. But after their defeat before the Omar Tabia lines Kryloff's men were in a thoroughly beaten condition, and Zotoff, the chief of the Russian staff, declared that it was no use sending them

forward. On the right Prince Charles concentrated fresh troops from his Roumanian divisions, and made more than one desperate and unavailing effort to capture the second of the Grivitza redoubts. On the left Imeritinski should have supported Skobeleff directly with fresh troops, indirectly by vigorously attacking Yunuz. But he showed very little energy, and his lieutenant had mostly to depend on what he could do for himself.

The sun had hardly risen when Osman launched his first attack upon the two captured redoubts. It was driven back, only to come on again. All day long the Turks moved regiment after regiment and crowds of irregulars to their right, and flung them against Skobeleff's hard-tried battalions. In the interval between each attack a storm of fire poured on the redoubts from three sides. But though their losses were terrible, it was not until late in the day that Skobeleff decided that he could not hold on for another night. The men were by this time breaking down. "Officers and men," says Skobeleff, "were becoming demoralized by the terrible fire." About four o'clock, when the Turks were massing for a final assault, which he foresaw would probably be successful, he gave the order to evacuate the redoubts. The retirement was made in good order, but under a heavy fire that inflicted considerable loss.

Just before sundown Adil Pasha made an attempt to capture the lost Grivitza redoubt; but the Roumanian garrison beat him back, and so the two days' battle at last came to an end.

The Turks had lost about 4,000 men, chiefly in their abortive attempts to storm the two redoubts which Skobeleff held so long, and in Adil Pasha's final assault on the Grivitza redoubt. The allied losses reached the terrible total of 16,000 killed and wounded. Of these less than 3,000 were Roumanians. In his fight on the left Skobeleff lost 160 officers and 5,600 men, or 48 per cent. of the force engaged. In the Vladimir Regiment, out of 15 company commanders 14 were killed or wounded. In the premature assault on Omar Tabia the Ugla Regiment lost 1,220 men, or 42 per cent., and the Yaroslav Regiment 1,025 men, or 49 per cent. of its strength.

But the mere losses, heavy as they were, were less serious than the sense of failure, the depression that for a while paralyzed the Russian army. The troops were concentrated east of Plevna. Only the Grivitza Redoubt No. 1 was held, though at first there was talk of abandoning it. Before a relieving column, advancing with a convoy from Sofia over the Balkans, the Russian cavalry were drawn in from the west side of the Vid, and till after the middle of October supplies came in freely to Osman. He was also able to send away some of his sick and wounded, and to replace them with fresh troops.

It was during this time that he informed the War Office at Constantinople that if there was any doubt about the west front of Plevna being kept open, he would evacuate the place and take up another position nearer the Balkan passes. The reply was

that sufficient troops were available to prevent the enemy again closing the Sofia road. So Osman held on.

But on October 24th Gourko with 30,000 men drove the Turks from Gorni-Dubniak, and closed the Sofia road, while an army of 125,000 Russians and Roumanians closely surrounded Plevna, and the famous engineer General Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol, came from Russia to direct a regular siege by trench and sap on the north-eastern front. Plevna was now doomed, unless relief could come from outside. But the Turkish plan of campaign was badly conceived and feebly executed. Osman, left to his own resources, held out till the first days of December. Provisions had become scarce in the besieged town, and fuel scanty, though the weather was bitterly cold, with snowy days and freezing nights. Fever and dysentery crowded the hospitals with thousands of dying men. At last, on December 10th, he made a gallant attempt to break out to the westward across the Vid ; but his half-starved army had to succumb to the attack of superior numbers. Thirty thousand men could not hope to fight their way through 120,000 enemies. After two hours' fighting and the loss of 5,000 the white flag of surrender was displayed. Osman had held the improvised earthworks of Plevna for nearly five months, and at last succumbed only to famine.

## CHAPTER IX.

### TEL-EL-KEBIR.

*September* 13, 1882.

ISMAIL PASHA, Khedive of Egypt, was a man of large ideas and extravagant tastes. He had made himself practically independent of the Sultan of Turkey, and tried to realize a dream of an Egyptian empire stretching from the Mediterranean to the great lakes of Central Africa. He completed the Suez Canal, and thus brought back to Egypt the main highway of the far Eastern trade. He anticipated the most famous of the projects of Cecil Rhodes, for when the first section of the Soudan railway was constructed from Wadi Halfa southwards, he insisted that the gauge should be that of the Cape Government railways, so that the tracks might join up some day, and trains run through from Cairo to Cape Town.

The unfortunate element in his large ideas was a recklessness about expenditure, and a spendthrift's carelessness about the terms on which successive loans were contracted. At last came the day when one of his Arab colonels organized a military protest

against a situation in which the officers of the army were left unpaid in order that money might be found to give the foreign bondholders their interest. Arabi Pasha's successful demonstration was the first step in a revolution. Disorders at Alexandria, in which European lives were lost and foreign property plundered, led to a joint British and French intervention. At the last moment France withdrew from the adventure, and after a British fleet had silenced the batteries of Alexandria and landed men to occupy the city, an army was sent under Wolseley to restore order in Egypt—with the unforeseen result of many years of war in the Nile valley, and the addition of a new protectorate to the British Empire.

The victory of Tel-el-Kebir, which decided the first campaign and made Britain mistress of the destinies of Egypt and of the lands of the Nile, is notable not only as one of those decisive battles which have changed the course of history, but also as an instance of tactics which are destined to play a considerable part in modern war—a night march followed by an attack at dawn.

The British army had been concentrated in the first instance at Alexandria. The Egyptian army, organized on European lines and partly trained by French, British, and American officers who had taken service with Ismail, occupied an entrenched position at Kafr-dowar, barring the neck of land between two marshy lagoons, along which lies the direct road from Alexandria into the delta. Lord Wolseley's plan of campaign, concealed up to the

last moment even from some of his immediate colleagues, was to use the fleet for the purpose of suddenly transferring his army from Alexandria to a new starting point at Ismailia on the Suez Canal. This would give him a shorter road to Cairo, along the line of the "Sweet-water Canal," constructed to supply fresh water from the Nile to the ports of the Suez Canal. The move to Ismailia was not a complete surprise for Arabi and the Egyptians. They had foreseen the possibility of an advance from the canal, and had laid out a line of entrenchments to bar this route, the point selected being a rise of the general level of the desert near the station of Tel-el-Kebir (that is, the "Big Mound"), on the Ismailia-Cairo Railway.

The troops had been embarked on the transports at Alexandria with an ostentatious announcement that they were destined to attack Damietta, and to advance from that point, turning the lines of Kafr-dowar. In the night of August 20th landing parties from warships that had entered the canal seized Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez. At dawn the transports were steaming along the canal towards the wide lake on which Ismailia stands, and for days the landing of men and stores went on. The vanguard of the expedition pushed on by the line of the Sweet-water Canal to El-Magfar, between which point and Tel-el-Mahuta there was a first action with the enemy on August 24th. Next day the Egyptians abandoned a partly entrenched position at Tel-el-Mahuta; this was occupied, and there was some skirmishing with them as they retired. An advanced

party then pushed on to Kassassin. On the 28th there was a hard-fought action at this point, the enemy attacking in force to overwhelm the advanced guard of the expedition, but being everywhere repulsed with heavy loss.

Wolseley had selected Kassassin as the place where he would concentrate for the decisive dash at Arabi's fortified position, and he now proceeded to bring up every available man, and to accumulate supplies for the advance. People in England who did not realize the difficulties of the work to be done waited impatiently for news, chafed at the apparent inaction of the expedition, and even talked of failure, as days and weeks went by without news of the hoped-for victory. For those who have not seen war in a desert region it is almost impossible to realize the time and labour required to keep an army supplied, and to accumulate a reserve that will enable an advance, once begun, to be carried on continuously for even a few days. Wolseley could not bring up his entire force from Ismailia till he could feed them, and it was no use storming the lines of Tel-el-Kebir unless the victory could be followed up by a swift advance on Cairo. So he bided his time, and spared no effort to ensure that when the blow was struck it should be decisive.

On September 9th Arabi made one more attack on Kassassin, and was again badly beaten, but his troops showed such good fighting qualities that every one felt they would be formidable adversaries behind the works of an entrenched position. And the strength

of the Tel-el-Kebir lines was growing daily under the efforts of thousands of impressed *fellahin* labourers, and of the soldiers themselves.

Before dawn on September 11th, and again on the 12th, Wolseley rode out with his staff and a small mounted escort to take as close a look as possible at the entrenchments when the sun rose. It was seen that the improvised fortifications had a front of about four miles.* There was a short line of entrenchments south of the canal. The main line, starting from its north bank, ran in a direction a little east of north. It followed the crest of a rise in the general level of the district, a stretch of hard sand and gravel, and the dull, monotonous brown colour of everything made it no easy matter to make out details. The rampart was low, five or six feet high, with a ditch of the same depth in front. It was afterwards found that a shallower ditch had been dug behind to supply additional material for the rampart, which was ten or twelve feet thick at its base. At more than one point in the long line batteries of guns had been placed in position. Several were mounted in a closed redoubt in the centre, at the highest point of the ground. From this fort a second line ran back along the desert plateau, and with the help of a cross trench enclosed a large space of ground. On the extreme left or north end of the main line there was an artillery-armed redoubt, but for this part of the line there was no sign of defences in the rear, and Wolseley decided that, while the infantry rushed the works in

* See plan.

front, the cavalry could charge round to the back of the entrenchments in this direction. Reports of spies said that the works were held by 19,000 regular infantry, including several battalions of black Soudanese troops, likely to be good fighters, and some 7,000 Arab irregulars.

The force concentrated at Kassassin for the attack amounted to 11,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and 60 guns, exclusive of a detachment that was to be left to guard the camp. The infantry were organized in two divisions. The 1st Division, under General Willis, was made up of the 1st or Guards Brigade, under the Duke of Connaught (2nd Grenadiers, 2nd Coldstreams, and 1st Scots) ; and the 2nd Brigade, under Sir Gerald Graham, composed of four line battalions, two of them Irish (Royal Irish Regiment and Royal Irish Fusiliers). The 2nd Division under General Hamley, included the 3rd or Highland Brigade, commanded by Sir Archibald Alison (Black Watch, Gordon, and Cameron Highlanders, and Highland Light Infantry) ; and the 4th Brigade under General Ashburnham, which had only two battalions in line (Duke of Cornwall's and King's Royal Rifles)—its other battalion, the West Kent, being left to guard the camp, with the exception of a single company that escorted the reserve ammunition on the advance. A battalion of Royal Marines accompanied the headquarters. The contingent sent from India, under Sir Herbert Macpherson, included the Seaforth Highlanders, a native infantry regiment, a battery of mountain artillery,

and a splendid regiment of native cavalry, the 13th Bengal Lancers. The British cavalry brigade, under Sir Drury Lowe, was made up of a composite regiment of Household Cavalry (a squadron from each of the three regiments), the 4th Dragoon Guards, the 19th Hussars, and two batteries of the Royal Horse Artillery. The navy supplied a contingent of 250 bluejackets with Gatling guns, and a 40-pounder mounted on a truck on the railway.

The plan of attack was explained to all the superior officers, and a sketch-map supplied to them for their guidance. The whole force was to march during the night in battle array, and be in position to attack at dawn, so that the dangerous space in front of the works might be crossed without the troops being long under fire. The Indian contingent, under Macpherson, was to follow the south bank of the canal, rush the extreme right of the works, and turn the whole line on that flank, crossing the canal, if need be, with the help of the Royal Engineer pontoon company that followed it. The naval brigade, with its machine-guns and the 40-pounder, was to march along the railway. The main body was to advance with its left on the railway, and its right covered by the cavalry brigade. On the left was to be Hamley's 2nd Division, the Highland Brigade in front; each battalion in quarter column,* and the four columns marching abreast of each other. Ashburnham's little brigade of two bat-

* That is, with the companies in line, six paces behind each other.

talions was to be in support in the same formation. Behind it would be the staff, the Royal Marines, and the reserve ammunition column. The 19th Hussars, detached from the cavalry brigade, were to be within call of the headquarters position. Willis's 1st Division was to form the right of the attack, Graham's Brigade in the same formation as the Highlanders in front, the Duke of Connaught's brigade of Guards in support—a disappointing position for these fine battalions. Between the two infantry divisions were the Royal Field Artillery batteries, under Brigadier-General Goodenough.

The fighting was to be with the bayonet in the first attack, but every man had 100 rounds of ammunition. There were just five days' provisions at Kassassin camp. Each man was to carry two days' rations. Two more were to be conveyed by the regimental transport. It was expected that further supplies would be captured in Arabi's camp; and it was known that as Tel-el-Kebir marked the edge of the fertile delta, abundant supplies could be collected from the country beyond.

Kassassin camp was apparently all quiet during the 12th. Really, the preparations for the advance were being unostentatiously completed, the outposts being pushed farther out to keep the enemy's Arab scouts at a good distance. It was not till late in the day that the word went round that the force was to march that night and fight a battle as the sun rose over the desert next day.

After dark the various units fell in, and were

moved to their positions, the line of battle being formed at the starting-point in front of the desert camp. There were busy hours before this could be done—striking tents, piling baggage near the railway line, issuing and inspecting ammunition and rations. No bugles or trumpets sounded. All words of command were given in a low voice. Strict orders had been issued that no lights were to be shown, not a match struck, no pipes or cigars lighted. It was not till half-past one that all was ready and the word was given for the march to begin. The night was intensely dark, with a clear starlit sky. There were no landmarks or tracks by which to direct the march; but in front of the Highland Brigade a naval officer, Commander Rawson, was posted to direct the advance across the desert by the compass and the stars as he would lay the course of a ship on the sea. Picked men were placed on the flanks of each regiment, and between the brigades and along the flanks of the battalion columns ropes were passed from front to rear, and held by the guide of each company at a point marked by a knot, so that connection and distance could be more easily kept.

At half-past one the word was passed to advance, and the men began to move forward. A desert night march that is to end in a battle produces a strange impression on those who take part in it. At times everything seems more like dreamland than reality. Those in the front rank see before them the mysterious darkness into which they go ever onward, with nothing to mark their progress; those behind are mov-

ing among shadowy masses of men. To keep order and direction is impossible if movement is at all rapid, so the pace is necessarily slow, with frequent checks and halts. The excitement of the start soon gives way to a weary sense of monotonous, objectless plodding, without any sense of progress. The hours seem endless. Tired men half doze, and stumble with a sudden start into wakefulness. Excitable men are liable to strange fits of nerves that make them liable to panic on the slightest provocation.

Though the strictest orders had been issued that there should be absolute silence and no lights should be shown, there was at the outset some difficulty in preventing talking in the ranks, and here and there surreptitious attempts at smoking were made. But before the first mile had been traversed all the moving masses of men had settled down into silence, and at fifty yards away from front and flanks there was nothing to be seen or heard. In the midst of the array there was the dull sound of footsteps on the hard sand, and the creaking of leathern accoutrements. Once there was an alarm. Wild screams like the outcry of a madman rang out. A young soldier had fallen down in a fit, and lay on the ground writhing and yelling. A staff officer galloped up and gave the grim order for the man to be bayoneted, as the continued noise might give the alarm to Arabs prowling in the darkness. A doctor intervened, and saved his life by offering to silence him temporarily with a strong injection of morphia. The poor fellow

was thus treated and carried to the rear on a stretcher, and the march was resumed.

The scouts in front and the cavalry on the right flank again and again reported parties of the enemy prowling near at hand in the darkness, but all these proved to be false alarms. Not a scout, not an outpost was in front of the lines of Tel-el-Kebir. The march had been well timed. As the eastern stars became dim, and a sudden whiteness along the desert horizon told of the short twilight and the coming day, the whispered word went along the lines, "Halt, halt!" and the ranks were dressed; and the second order came, "Fix bayonets!" The light was rapidly increasing, and along the rising ground of the desert, only half a mile in front, the gray lines of Arabi's entrenchments loomed up dimly against the sky.

Forward again went the silent army, the infantry moving with swift swinging strides, all now alert with the sense of impending battle. The kilted Highland regiments on the left were a little nearer the works than the right of the line. Only some 300 yards separated them from the works in front, when the long silence was broken by the sharp *crack-crack* of a few rifles, and a Highlander staggered forward and dropped dead. A bugle note rang out from the enemy's lines, and then in a moment rampart and redoubt flashed into fire. From right to left a sheet of flame seemed to run along the two miles of front, and here and there the long red flashes of the Egyptian artillery sprang out into the twi-

light. Silence and semi-darkness had suddenly given way to an uproar of sound and a volcano of flame. The enemy's fire was mostly too high. Overhead there was a whistle and roar of flying metal that sounded like a hurricane. All along the front men went down as the bugles sounded the charge, and the voices of the officers were heard calling on their men.

The regiments of the first line raced for the ramparts, behind them the supports doubled forward, and the artillery teams broke into a sharp trot. Away to the right the cavalry were galloping for the flank of the works. Beyond the canal the Indian Brigade and the Seaforths and the sailors were rushing to the attack.

The first to reach the enemy's lines were the Highland Brigade. The rampart was wrapped in dense smoke, torn by the fire flashes, as the kilted Scotsmen jumped down into the ditch and began to climb the mound on the other side. It was steep enough to give them momentary shelter. Men and officers helped each other up. The pipers, standing on the edge amid the flying bullets, played the wild battle music of the clans.

The first man to mount the parapet was Donald Cameron, a private of the Cameron Highlanders. For a moment he stood among the drifting smoke, stabbing with his bayonet at the nearest of the enemy; then he fell back into the ditch riddled with bullets. But his momentary stand had allowed others to climb up behind him; and once a footing

was won on the crest more and more were up and over it, and the Highlanders came pouring into the works, Camerons and Gordons mingling together in the mass of men that bore everything down before its bristling bayonets.

There had been severe loss as the Highlanders forced their way over the crest amid the showers of bullets that met them at point-blank range. They had not fired a shot in return. They trusted to claymore and bayonet till the Egyptians, driven from the first line of works, rallied in their retirement to the inner line. On the right the first regiment to get into the entrenchments was the 18th Royal Irish. They surged over ditch and rampart with a wild "Hurroo!" that was heard amid the din of the battle and the cheers of their English comrades of the 2nd Brigade. They cleared the rampart of its defenders with bayonet and butt, and then wheeling to their left rolled up the line of Egyptians in action with the next regiment of the brigade. The cavalry, sweeping round the flank, rode in among the flying enemy. Some of the batteries had unlimbered close to the works, and were sending a shower of shells into the high redoubt in the centre. Away to the extreme left of the attack the Seaforths and the Indians troops had rushed the works beyond the canal. Through the twilight a mass of Arab horsemen came riding towards the flank of the attack; but before they could charge the bluejackets had swung round their Gatling guns and poured a shower of bullets into them, sending them off in wild flight,

hotly pursued by the Bengal Lancers. The 40-pounder was in action on the railway. The Royal Engineers had launched their pontoons on the canal, and in a few minutes they had thrown a bridge over it, across which Macpherson rode at the head of the Seaforths, to turn Arabi's right and combine with Alison's Highlanders in completing the victory on that side.

In the centre Wolseley and the staff had ridden close up to the ditch. As he arrived there a stretcher party was carrying off Wyatt Rawson mortally wounded. After guiding the advance through the night, he had fallen in the first rush towards the works. Wolseley had brought up the second line; but the rampart was already won, and there was no need to send them into the fight. The fire of the Egyptians passing over the heads of the attack had killed and wounded some of the Guardsmen, who were disappointed at being mere spectators of the battle. Two killed and 14 wounded was the total loss of the Duke of Connaught's splendid brigade. Among the wounded were Colonel Sterling of the Coldstreams, and Father Bellord, the Catholic chaplain of the Guards (afterwards Bishop of Gibraltar).

The fighting did not last quite half an hour, but it is a mistake to say that it was an easily won victory. The Egyptian army, and above all its black Soudanese battalions, made a hard fight. On the right especially they rallied and turned to bay again and again. Sir Archibald Alison, who commanded the Highlanders on this part of the field, says of the defeated enemy:

—"I must do justice to those much-maligned Egyptian soldiers. I never saw men fight more steadily. They were falling back upon an inner line of works, which we had taken in flank. At every re-entering angle, at every battery and redoubt, they rallied and renewed the fight. Five or six times we had to close on them with the bayonet, and I saw these poor men fighting hard when their officers were flying before us."

The inner line was turned by the attack of the Seaforths, the Indian troops, and the naval brigade. In the centre, caught between the converging attacks from right and left, hundreds threw down their arms. Thousands were streaming to the rear. At Tel-el-Kebir station there were several trains with steam up. Two of these got away, crowded with fugitives. A third was just starting when a shell burst in the boiler of the engine and blew it up, blocking the line. The shot came from the captured works on the right centre. There a battery of Horse Artillery, whose drivers boast that they can take guns over anything, had dashed over ditch and rampart. One gun came to grief with a broken wheel, but five got in. The first that got over unlimbered, and was laid on the engine as its target by young Lieutenant Feilding (now the Earl of Denbigh and Colonel of the Honourable Artillery Company). That well-aimed shot, by stopping the railway transport, secured some thousands of prisoners.

The cavalry had dashed in among the fugitives, but now rallied, and soon Drury Lowe had started

with his horsemen and light artillery on the wonderful forced march that prevented any rally of the beaten army, and by one bold stroke secured possession of Cairo. Arabi had ridden away, but his camp, his artillery, and a crowd of prisoners were the trophies of the victors. Wolseley, accompanied by his staff and Admiral Beauchamp Seymour, rode over the conquered works amid the enthusiastic cheers of his men. General Macpherson, with his Highlanders, the Indian troops, and the sailors, was already in full march for the junction of Zagazig, the occupation of which secured a large quantity of rolling stock and huge magazines of stores.

The victory had been swift and complete. Considering how short a time the fight had lasted, the losses were serious. Killed and wounded amounted to 459 officers and men. The regiment that lost most was the Highland Light Infantry. It had three officers and 14 non-commissioned officers and men killed, and 52 non-commissioned officers and men wounded, besides 11 missing, most of whom must be counted as dead and not identified.

In the fight for the works and the immediate pursuit the Egyptian army lost over 2,500 killed and wounded. But in a military sense the army of Arabi was destroyed. Most of the mounted troops got away and held together, but thousands of the infantry were prisoners, and thousands more disbanded and returned to their villages. Sixty-six guns were taken—field-pieces and fortress guns mounted in the works.

The victory was followed by the seizure of Cairo, and the surrender of the troops holding the lines in front of Alexandria at Kafr-dowar. The battle decided the campaign. Compared with the giant conflicts of European war it was a small affair, but it was in a double sense "epoch-making." First, it was a perfect example of the new tactics that were to play a great part in the wars of coming years. The deadly effect of modern rifle fire had made it a costly business to fight one's way up to within charging distance of a hostile position in the daylight; hence the value of the night march, preparatory to an attack at close quarters at dawn. In the second place, it was the opening of a new chapter in the world's history. The English protectorate in Egypt would mean responsibility for all the lands of the Nile valley, and while Wolseley was scattering the armies of Arabi, the Mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed, was preaching and fighting in the far Soudan, and raising a revolt that would mean long years of warfare. Out of the armies that were defeated at Tel-el-Kebir and surrendered at Kafr-dowar and Cairo Evelyn Wood and Grenfell would build up a disciplined fighting force that in years to come would march side by side with and as comrades of the victors, and carry the flags of Britain and Egypt a thousand miles into the heart of Africa.

## CHAPTER X.

### ADOWA.

*March* 1, 1896.

THE battle of Adowa, fought on March 1, 1896, between Menelek's huge army of semi-barbarian warriors and Baratieri's force of Italian regulars and native levies under European officers, was an epoch-making event. It was the first great victory won by a non-European race over the white man which had lasting and decisive results. No effort was made to reverse its grim verdict. It marked the close of a period of four centuries during which the superior arms, tactics, and *morale* of the white man had enabled him to scatter, when and where he would, the badly-armed levies of the "inferior races," and to parcel out the earth at his will.

Like all the other European powers, the new kingdom of Italy had colonial ambitions, and when, in the later years of the nineteenth century, a general scramble for African territory began, the Premier, Crispi, formed a project for obtaining a share of it for Italy on the shores of the Red Sea and in the highlands of Abyssinia. While England was fight-

ing the Dervishes about Suakin, an Italian expedition seized Massowah, a Turkish town on the Red Sea shore, which was the port for Northern Abyssinia and the starting-point for the caravan route to Kassala, then in the possession of the Mahdists. Fortified posts were established along this caravan route, and in 1894 Kassala was taken by General Baratieri, the governor of the Italian Red Sea Colony.

Before Kassala was occupied, the Italians had gained a footing in the Abyssinian highlands. Kassai, Prince of Tigré, the northern district of Abyssinia, had helped the British against King Theodore in 1867, and used the arms they presented to him to make himself Negus Negusti, or "King of Kings"—that is, overlord or emperor of Abyssinia, under the name of Johannes. He opposed the Italians when they marched on to the plateau and fortified themselves at Asmara; and after his death in battle with the Dervishes, Ras Alula, who had been one of his most trusted chiefs, continued a desultory warfare against Baratieri.

In order to strengthen their position, the Italians secured the alliance of a remarkable man, Menelek, the Prince of Shoa, in South Abyssinia, who now claimed the title of Negus. The Italians supplied him freely with arms, and supported his claim, and he secured the submission of Ras Alula and the Tigré province. Menelek was then proclaimed "Emperor of Ethiopia," and by a treaty with the Italians ceded the coast district and the Asmara region to them. In Europe it was announced that

he had accepted their protectorate over Abyssinia, and that all its relations with other countries were to be conducted by the Italian Foreign Office.

The seizure of Kassala displeased the new emperor. He had hoped to conquer the district himself. There also seems to have been a serious misunderstanding about the so-called "Protectorate" clause in the treaty. In the Italian version it was clear that Menelek was bound to use the Italian Government as his intermediary in all negotiations with foreign powers. But in the duplicate Abyssinian version it was stated that the Negus "might" use the good offices of Italy in such negotiations. One day a French visitor to Menelek's capital at Addis Abeba carefully explained to him the terms and the meaning of the official Italian version. The Negus was furious. He said he had been tricked and deceived, and he protested against the Protectorate. In return for railway and mining concessions, French capitalists provided him with funds to pay off an Italian loan of four millions, and the French Government, in exchange for a supply of mules for the Madagascar expedition, gave him a large quantity of Gras rifles and ammunition, and French dealers further increased his stock of guns, rifles, and other equipments for war. Even before these supplies reached him he had begun hostilities early in 1895, by sending one of his chiefs, Ras Mangasha, a son of Johannes, to raid the Italian territory. Mangasha had only 10,000 men with him, and was badly beaten by Baratieri at Coatit on January 14th. This easy

success led the Italians to despise their enemy. They pushed their frontier forward into Tigré, garrisoning several points; while Menelek, with the help of his French friends, prepared for operations on a larger scale.

The crisis came in December 1895. General Arimondi, who commanded the Italian advanced positions in Tigré, had fortified the little town of Makalla, and sent out to the southwards a column of 2,000 native levies under Italian officers, and commanded by Major Toselli. Toselli had camped at the village of Amba Alagi. He was not aware that there was any large force of Abyssinians in the neighbourhood until the morning of December 7th, when he was attacked by some 20,000 of the enemy and driven back on Makalla, with a loss of 1,300 native soldiers and 20 Italian officers, more than half his force.

The victors of Amba Alagi were only the vanguard of a huge army of more than 100,000 men which Menelek had assembled, and with which he besieged Makalla. The little garrison made a splendid defence, but through want of water was forced to surrender on January 20, 1896. Baratieri had hoped it would hold out till he could, with the held of reinforcements from Italy, assemble an army for its relief. He could now only hope to avenge this twofold disaster.

Menelek released his prisoners and proposed terms of peace; but the Italian Government informed Baratieri that there could be no peace till

a victory had been won that would wipe out the memory of Amba Alagi and Makalla. Menelek had moved his army from Makalla to a strong position in the hills about Adowa. The Italians had concentrated in a fortified camp a few miles to the eastward on the mountain road to Adi Cajé. Baratieri's forces gradually rose to about 25,000 men, of whom 10,000 were Italian regulars and the rest native troops under European officers. He had some 70 guns, mostly small mountain artillery. The lines of communication, by which ammunition and supplies were brought up from the coast, lay along the narrow and difficult mountain paths from Massowah by Senafe and Adi Cajé, and by a second line through Asmara and Coatit. These lines had to be guarded against hostile raids, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Baratieri was able to feed his army in its highland camp. He had to refuse further reinforcements, because to increase his numbers would have been to risk starvation. But his spies informed him that Menelek's hordes about Adowa were in the same straits. They had eaten up the scanty supplies of the district, and depended on caravans coming from a distance. He reckoned that very soon Menelek would have either to attack the Italian fortified camp or to disband his army. Acting on the defensive, Baratieri thought he could count with certainty on a victory. If, instead of attacking, Menelek dispersed his army, the Italians could assume the offensive.

In Italy, as the weeks went by, there was a grow-

ing discontent with Baratieri's Fabian tactics. Crispi, the Premier, telegraphed to him a message urging him to action. When he still waited, General Baldissera was sent out to supersede him. Precautions were taken to keep this step secret until Baldissera could reach the front, but while he was still at sea some of Baratieri's friends succeeded in sending him the news.

For a few days the general vacillated between an anxiety to strike a blow before his successor arrived and a realization of the inadequate force available for the attempt. Once he was on the point of falling back on Adi Cajé to shorten his line of supply, but rumours that Menelek was also thinking of retreat induced him to hold on. Then his spies brought him a false report that the Abyssinians were actually withdrawing, that some thousands had already gone, and on the last day of February he suddenly decided to advance against the enemy.

Garrisons on the lines of communication, and a strong column sent off to deal with hostile raiders and ordered too late to rejoin, had greatly reduced his fighting force. He had available for active service on this last day of February about 17,000, of whom rather more than 10,000 were Italians, the rest natives. There were 56 guns (44 light mountain guns and 12 quick-firers). The little army was organized in four brigades. Three were to form the right, left, and centre of the advance and the battle line; the fourth was to follow in reserve. The brigade commanders, organization, and numbers were as follows:—

*Right Column.* GENERAL DABORMIDA.

*2nd Infantry Brigade.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Two regiments, each of 3 battalions | 2,640 men | Three batteries = 18 guns. |
| Native militia and irregulars . . | 960 „ | |
| | 3,600 men. | |

*Centre Column.* GENERAL ARIMONDI.

*1st Infantry Brigade.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| One regiment of Bersaglieri (rifles), 2 battalions . . . . . | 773 men | Two batteries = 12 guns. |
| One line regiment, 3 battalions . . . | 1,500 „ | |
| Native troops . . . . . | 220 „ | |
| | 2,493 men. | |

*Left Column.* GENERAL ALBERTONE.

*Native Brigade.*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Four native battalions . . . . | 3,700 men | 1½ batteries (native gunners) . . . | = 6 guns. |
| Native irregulars . | 376 „ | 2 Italian batteries . | = 8 „ |
| | 4,076 men. | | 14 guns. |

*Reserve.* GENERAL ELLENA.

*3rd Infantry Brigade.*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Five line battalions and one Alpine battalion . . . . . | 2,930 men | Two Q.F. batteries = 12 guns. |
| Native battalion . . . . . | 1,150 „ | |
| Engineers . . . . . | 70 „ | |
| | 4,150 men. | |

| Summary. | Generals. | Infantry. | Artillery. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Right. | Dabormida. | 3,600 men. | 18 guns. |
| Centre. | Arimondi. | 2,493 „ | 12 „ |
| Left. | Albertone. | 4,076 „ | 14 „ |
| Reserve. | Ellena. | 4,150 „ | 12 (Q.F.) guns. |
| | Totals . . | 14,319 men. | 56 guns. |

This represents the effective fighting force. Besides, there were nearly 3,000 more Italians and natives belonging to departmental corps (transport, ambulances, etc.).

General Baratieri's plan was to march, in the night between February 29th and March 1st, by three roughly parallel mountain tracks, and occupy a strong and (as he believed) easily defensible position within short striking distance of the enemy's camps. The position was formed by the bold mass of hills known as Mount Belah, with the lower summit of Belah Hill, and the great buttress marked on Italian maps as the "Spur of Belah." Two deep, ravine-like valleys guarded the flanks, and to the front there was a good open field of fire across a wide hollow, through which ran a mountain torrent. In its rear the hills of Rebbi Arienni and Mount Rajo formed a second line of defence and a position for the reserve.

Baratieri hoped to have three of his brigades formed up on the Mount Belah position at daybreak on March 1st, with Ellena's Brigade in reserve at Rebbi Arienni. Italian officers with native scouts would then be sent out to the front to reconnoitre the enemy's positions. Subsequent action would depend on their reports. He anticipated that either they would find that Menelek's hordes were dispersing and retiring, in which case he could follow them up and harass their retreat; or, if they still held together, he hoped his advance would provoke the enemy into attacking him on his chosen position, where he considered that the

weapons and the disciplined tactics of a civilized army would enable him to deal with any number of mere semi-barbarians.

The night march, over narrow stony paths, in the midst of tangled tropical vegetation, and in utter darkness, proved to be a difficult and tedious operation. The men had often to move in single file. The guides of one brigade mistook the way, and it blocked for hours the progress of another, on to whose line of advance it had wandered. Worst of all, Albertone's Brigade on the left made a mistake that ruined the whole plan.

In Baratieri's orders to Albertone he was directed to occupy the "Hill of Kidané Meret," and on a very rough sketch-map, drawn up by the headquarters staff, Kidané Meret was marked as the name of the rocky northern slope of Mount Kaulos, due south of Mount Belah, and divided from it by a wide gully running up towards Mount Rajo. Baratieri intended that Albertone should hold this ground in order to guard the flank of the Belah position. It was a badly-chosen post for the left brigade, for it was itself dominated by the higher slope of Mount Kaulos. In the darkness before dawn Albertone reached this spot, and was halting his brigade when the native guides told him he had not yet reached Kidané Meret. They said it was a hill farther to the front, near Mount Enda Kidané. It appears that so far as the name went they were quite right, and the improvised staff map was wrong.

Albertone had a bad quarter of an hour. He

was ordered to march to Kidané Meret, and there appeared to be two "Kidané Merets." The guides assigned to him by the general insisted that the real Kidané Meret was out in front; the staff map said it was where he stood. After some hesitation he decided to trust the guides rather than the map, which was notoriously unreliable. Probably the decision was helped by his seeing, even in the half-light of the early twilight, that he was halting in a hollow between two huge masses of mountain side.

The brigade moved on. It descended a valley towards the left, crossed a mountain stream, and then, turning south-westward, reached a rising ground, and as day broke came out on the slopes above another valley. The guides pointed to a summit in front, on the other side of the hollow, as Mount Enda Kidané, and declared that the hill of Kidané Meret was its north-western spur.

Albertone knew enough of the general position to suspect that his prolonged advance had brought him near the ground on which the enemy were camped. He halted on the slopes above the valley, and sent forward across it a native battalion to occupy the hill of Kidané Meret as an advanced guard, and explore the ground in the neighbourhood.

Meanwhile as the day broke Baratieri had reached the hill of Belah. The head of the right column (Dabormida) was coming up to the spur, north of the hill. On to the hill itself marched the head of the centre column (Arimondi). Ellena, with the

reserve, was still toiling over the mountain paths far to the rear. The mass of Mount Belah cut off all view to the southward, but Baratieri felt sure that beyond it Albertone was in position on the " Kidané Meret " of the map.

As the sun rose over the mountains there came the sound of distant firing from the left front. Baratieri attached no importance to it. He took it as an indication that scouting parties thrown forward by Albertone were in action with the enemy's outposts. He thought the firing, indistinctly heard, was not very far off, and did not consider it heavy enough for a serious action. He busied himself arraying the troops of his right and centre as they reached the position, sending most of Arimondi's Brigade to occupy the south-western slopes of Mount Belah. It was from Arimondi he first learned that Albertone was not in position south of Belah, and he then connected his absence with the firing heard farther to the front, and began to be anxious about other possible and unexpected developments.

Let us now see what the Abyssinians were doing. Menelek's army lay in camp and bivouac around Adowa. Ras Makonnen held the place itself with 15,000 of the men of Harrar. Menelek's own camp was immediately to the west of it. He had with him the warriors of Shoa and Amhara—25,000 riflemen and 6,000 horsemen—besides his warlike Empress Taitu's corps of 3,000 foot and 6,000 horse. In the royal camp most of the artillery of the army was concentrated—36 guns, including some new Hotch-

kiss quick-firers. The only other artillery in possession of any of the chiefs was a battery of six mountain guns with Ras Alula and Mangasha, who commanded the men of Tigré, 12,000 rifles strong, on the left. Ras Mikael, who camped just north of Adowa, had with him some 5,000 Galla horsemen, born riders from the plains of the south, mounted on wiry little horses, and armed with spears or rifles.

The whole force was about 120,000 strong. There were 80,000 armed with rifles, nearly all breech-loaders, and mostly of the French Gras pattern, lately superseded in the French army by the Lebel. There were some thoroughly up-to-date Lebels, a considerable number of Remingtons, and a few Martinis. There were about 10,000 horsemen, and a great body of irregulars—armed peasants assembled with spear and sword and shield.

The leaders of this great host were aware of Baratieri's advance long before he had reached Mount Belah. They were well served by their spies. Some of these were actually taking pay from Baratieri's intelligence department, and thus secured facilities for coming and going between Adowa and the Italian camp, giving the enemy unimportant or false and misleading news, and bringing back to their friends reliable information. It was one of these agents, in Ras Alula's employ, who roused him in the middle of the night with the welcome tidings that the white men had left their fortified stronghold, and were trailing along the mountain paths in straggling columns a few miles away.

Word was sent to Menelek and the other chiefs, and before the sun rose the army of Ethiopia was in battle array and beginning to move eastward in irregular masses to find and fall upon the Italians. An English historian of the war has given a vivid description of the scene :—

"The whole of this great host was now upon the alert. A hundred and twenty thousand men thrown up from the unknown depths of Africa were preparing to rush against the Europeans. The chiefs were issuing their commands; but each warrior knew the general plan of the battle, and was accustomed to take his own course in a moment of difficulty. How extraordinary must the scene have appeared during these gray hours before dawn amongst the irregular and crowded tents! Thousands of lean, fierce-looking Ethiopians, in the cloak of brilliant colours that they wear in the day of battle; riflemen; spearmen from the hills; swordsmen buckling the crooked blade on to their right side, so as to give free play to the shield arm; wild riders from the plains; priests giving absolution; women and children even; and here and there some great feudal chief, with black leopard or lion skin, on his horse, with gold embossed shield, silver bracelets, and all the magnificence of barbarian war. The sun had not yet risen when they moved out across the fertile plain of Adowa." *

Menelek's own Shoans, with the men of Amhara and Gojjam, streamed eastward in a huge column towards Enda Kidané; and here, shortly after six o'clock, the swarm of rifle-armed scouts thrown out in front of their advance came in contact with Albertone's vanguard, the 1st Native Battalion, under Colonel Turitto.

For some time Turitto did not realize that he had a formidable mass of enemies in his front. The

* G. F. H. Berkeley, "The Campaign of Adowa."

Shoans came on in a scattered line of skirmishers through the broken, rocky ground, and the native battalion, formed in line, held them back with its well-directed fire; but when the fight had gone on for more than an hour, it was evident that the enemy was being continually reinforced. Masses of dark warriors appeared on the flanks of the line, and Turitto began to fall back. At first his rear companies checked the pursuit, but then the enemy came on in a wild rush and swept away the rearguard. The retreat became a disorderly flight, pressed by thousands of exulting barbarians. Turitto had 18 Italian officers with him: 14 were shot down, two taken prisoners. The remnant of the battalion was saved by the main body of Albertone's Brigade, on the slopes of Adi Vetshi, opening fire with mountain guns and rifles on the enemy as they tried to cross the valley in their front, at the heels of the fugitives.

Albertone was now in a position of extreme peril. Thanks to the false information conveyed to Baratieri by the spies, he had marched out fully expecting that his work would be to harass the retirement of a starving and demoralized enemy. But now that his vanguard battalion had been driven in upon him a hopeless wreck, with most of its white officers *hors de combat*—though he had checked the first rush of the pursuit—he saw that thousands of exulting enemies were swarming over the ridges in his front, spreading out to right and left, throwing forward the flanks of their line into the horns of the enveloping

crescent that is the typical attack formation of a rush of the wild races in so many parts of Africa. The enemy was not moving in ordered lines, but coming on in irregular bodies grouped around their chiefs. Along the front of the advance the riflemen were firing, but as yet their shooting was doing very little harm.

To meet this rush he had his Native Brigade—three battalions still intact, a few hundred irregulars—a little more than 3,000 rifles in all, and 14 light mountain guns, six of them served by native gunners, the other eight grouped in two batteries manned by Sicilians. He had formed his brigade, in a line just over a mile long, on the rocky, bush-covered slopes, with his guns in the left centre, where the curve of the hill made a salient in his front. Against threefold or fourfold odds he would have been safe enough, but here he was faced by tens of thousands. Away to his right their fire came from the thorny scrub on the nearer slopes of Mount Gusoso. To his left they were hurrying across the stream in the hollow, and coming up the slopes to envelop him on that side also. Three miles of wild hill country separated him from the main body on Mount Belah. To attempt to retire would have been to be at once surrounded on all sides by a rush of his lightly-equipped and fleet-footed opponents; but to stand his ground meant also being soon cut off and attacked on all sides, unless the sound of his guns brought prompt help from the main body.

From the first there were unpleasant signs that the sight of the hostile multitude, coming steadily forward in spite of heavy loss from shell and rifle fire, was telling on the nerves of some of the native troops, and even of the native officers. And the position looked still worse when suddenly shells began to burst in the Italian batteries. Menelek had brought up to the hill of Enda Kidané his Hotchkiss quick-firers—a better weapon than Albertone's mountain guns—and the stream of shells they poured into his position began to work havoc among the native and the Sicilian gunners.

When Albertone's artillery came into action, Baratieri at Mount Belah knew at last that something serious was happening to his missing brigade. He had only vague ideas as to its position, but he made an attempt to send it help. He ordered his right brigade, under General Dabormida, to move forward and co-operate with Albertone, either by helping him to beat off the enemy, or, if they were too strong, by covering a retirement on the main position. Dabormida had with him six European battalions and three batteries, and a battalion of native irregulars—about 4,000 men and 18 guns. It was a day of mishaps for the Italians. Dabormida descended into the valley in front of the Spur of Belah; then, misled by the sound of the cannonade echoing among the hills, he took a wrong direction. Instead of going up the valley—a line of march which would soon have brought him on to the track of Albertone's advance—he moved down the stream

north of Mount Derer, towards the valley of Miriam Shiavitu. A mass of mountains with precipitous, cliff-like faces now separated him from Albertone, and he was marching down the long hollow up which the warriors of Ras Alula, Mangasha, and Makonnen were advancing to the attack.

The brigade halted in the valley some three miles from Mount Belah. The hollow down which the stream ran was about half a mile wide. On the left the hills rose in bold rock faces furrowed with ravines; on the right there were undulating slopes, and on these, and in the valley bottom, were stretches of scrub, alternating with high sunburnt grass. Officers were sent forward to reconnoitre, and the men, weary with the night march, threw themselves on the ground, and many of them slept. An examination of the stream showed that the water was not fit to drink; but most of the men had already emptied their water-bottles, the sun was hot, and it proved to be impossible to prevent hundreds from drinking freely of it.

Major de Vito, who commanded the irregulars attached to the brigade, sent in word that an extensive camp was in sight to the front, north of Adowa, and that large bodies of the enemy were moving between it and the hills to the southward, whence came the sound of the cannonade. Dabormida then directed De Vito to move in that direction with his irregulars and gain touch with Albertone; and at a quarter-past nine he sent a dispatch back to Baratieri, in which he wrote: "I am holding out a hand to

the Native Brigade, while keeping a strong body of troops massed near the road to Adowa and watching the heights on my right." This report gave the commander-in-chief the impression that Dabormida had actually got into touch with Albertone. He had no idea that two miles of mountain country held by the enemy interposed between his advanced brigades.

As De Vito climbed to the top of the high ground on Dabormida's left, he saw that the enemy was also advancing along the heights and was close at hand. He ran forward with his men to seize a bold ridge that offered a vantage-ground for defence. To reach it the native battalion had to scramble across a deep ravine; but they gained the ridge, formed in line, and stopped the first rush of the Tigré men. But the enemy came on again in greater numbers. De Vito was shot dead, and his irregulars were hustled across the ravine after a hard fight, and driven in with the loss of all but one of their fourteen white officers.

During the fight on the ridge Dabormida had formed up his brigade for battle. Colonel Ragni deployed the three battalions of the 3rd Regiment on the left. Two of them, sent well up the heights, covered the retirement, or rather the flight, of the broken native battalion. In the valley the three batteries (18 mountain guns) were drawn up in line among the long grass. On their right was the 6th Regiment, under Colonel Airaghi—one battalion deployed in a long firing line, the two others in reserve well to

the rear. On the extreme right a few hundred native auxiliaries, under Major Prevasi, were thrown out to watch the rising ground on that side.

On the heights to the left the steady fire of Ragni's men beat back rush after rush of the enemy. Along the valley a fierce attack developed against the centre of the brigade. The bush and long grass were alive with riflemen and spearmen moving directly against the batteries, firing as they came, and a mass of the Galla cavalry charged the battalion on the right. The Galla horsemen were driven back by the Italian rifles and a salvo of shells from the nearest battery. The fire from the bush caused few casualties in the brigade, for the enemy shot wildly and sent most of their bullets high over the heads of the Italians. To support the attack an Abyssinian battery came into action on the heights to the left, but its guns fired slowly and made bad practice. Dabormida turned one of his batteries on the enemy's artillery, and soon nearly silenced it.

For more than two hours he easily repulsed every attack. The men were perfectly steady, and as they felt their power of holding back the rushes of the barbarians, and saw the heaps of dead strewing the ground over which their assailants had charged, they became quite cheerful with the sense of victory, joked with each other, and greeted Dabormida with loud "*vivas*" as he rode along the line.

But two miles to the southward there was dire disaster for the Italian arms—the beginning of the end. Here Albertone was facing the main attack.

At first the fight seemed to be going well for him. Though the shell-fire of Menelek's Hotchkiss batteries caused some loss and tended to shake the native battalions, their white officers steadied them, and the rushes of the enemy across the valley in front were stopped before they could reach its eastern side. The Sicilian gunners were making splendid practice, and inflicting heavy loss on the Shoans. But the danger was not from the frontal attacks, but from the thousands that were continually pushing forward on the flanks, most of them beyond the immediate view of the defence, and then turning inwards to strengthen and extend the horns of the hostile crescent.

Twice Baratieri had sent orders to the Native Brigade to retire, but the messages had not reached Albertone. However, between nine and ten o'clock, while Dabormida was still victorious away on the right, Albertone decided that he must try to fight his way back to the main body. Losses were increasing. He had engaged his last reserve. Black crowds of the enemy were surging round his flanks. To hold on any longer west of Adi Vetshi would be to be hemmed in by tens of thousands.

The retirement began from the right over the shoulder of the hill. A battalion and the two Sicilian batteries were to protect the retreat, the batteries retiring alternately. "You must sacrifice yourselves to save the brigade," said Albertone to the gunners. They nobly obeyed. As the brigade moved round the hill the Sicilians fought their guns

to the last, firing in the faces of the enemy, who were now emboldened by the sight of the invaders giving way, and rushed recklessly to the charge, yelling out their savage battle-cry, "*Elbagume! elbagume!*" ("Kill! kill!"). They closed with the bayonets of the rearguard. They got in among the guns. The infantry broke. The Sicilians fought with carbine and bayonet, swords, rammers; but they were few against many, and the batteries were taken with the loss of nearly every one of their defenders. There were four officers and 62 men with the 3rd Battery at the beginning of the fight. Only one officer and two men came out of it. Of the four officers and 73 men of the 4th Battery only four men escaped from the rout.

The native batteries had already fired their last round, and were retiring with the guns on the pack-saddles of their mules in the midst of what was left of the infantry. The pursuers had closed in on the brigade on all sides. Some of the white and native officers managed to keep their men together, and fought in the midst of a yelling mob of savages. The brigade made slow progress, leaving a trail of dead behind it, and every rush on its flanks and rear reduced its numbers. The mules were shot down, and all the guns abandoned to the enemy.

Shortly after ten o'clock Baratieri, from Mount Belah, saw the first signs of the disaster to his advanced left brigade. Numbers of disbanded native soldiers were seen running towards the main position across the valley in front, closely pursued by the Shoans.

Some shells were fired at these to check them, but it was difficult to do so, they kept so close behind the beaten men. Then away to the right it was seen that a party of the enemy were attacking a battalion that Baratieri had pushed out along the high ground on that side to secure communication with Dabormida. The battalion held its own.

But then over the heights in front a huge mass of savage warriors poured into the valley, and regardless of the artillery fire directed upon them by Arimondi's batteries, swept up the Spur of Belah. Their swift advance came as a surprise. It was the main central column of the attack, which had moved up from below Mount Nasruai, been reinforced from that which had outflanked Albertone's right, and then moved across the rocky ground west of Mount Derer, while Dabormida's left was busy repelling the immediate attack upon it. The column had then poured like a flood over the northern slope of Derer, across the stream below it, and up the Spur of Belah, its vanguard sweeping on towards the hill of Rebbi Arienni, where Ellena met it. He had not all his brigade with him, for part of it had already moved forward to reinforce Arimondi on Mount Belah.

The Italian army was now cut up into three unequal detachments. Far out in front was Dabormida's Brigade, intact and locally victorious, but, though the general was not yet aware of it, separated by the last rush of the enemy from the main body. On the left front Albertone's Brigade, or rather the

wreck of it, was surrounded by an exultant mob of barbarian victors. In the centre was the main body, now closely attacked by an overwhelming number of enemies who had established themselves on the main position, and threatened to drive a wedge between the two brigades.

A battalion of Bersaglieri dashed at the spur to recapture it, but mere weight of numbers drove them back. Their colonel was killed. He was seen wounded, cut off from his men, defending himself with his sword with one knee on the ground. He was run through by one of the Galla spearmen. Arimondi had now to face another attack from the front and the left. All that held together of Albertone's Brigade had been destroyed. The general himself was badly wounded, and was a prisoner.

Then most of those who had been attacking the Native Brigade left the work of mere massacre and went forward against Mount Belah. Menelek brought up his quick-firers to engage Arimondi's artillery. The hills and the valley west of Belah were black with moving crowds of the enemy, "swarming like ants on a disturbed ant-hill." A rush came up the hollow south of Belah, over the ground Albertone was to have held. Here was posted Colonel Galliano's native battalion, called up shortly before from the reserve. Galliano's men were supposed to be among the best in the army. They were the heroic defenders of Makalla. But they had not been twenty minutes under fire when they suddenly broke and fled. Galliano with his

white officers and a few brave men met the rush of the enemy. He was wounded in the face, knocked down, and made prisoner. His captors were leading him to the rear, when he became faint with loss of blood and sat down on the ground to rest. Then one of the Shoans blew his brains out.

Arimondi's left was now exposed. He was attacked fiercely from the front, and from the spur the enemy's riflemen began to climb the hill and fire down on him from the upper slopes of Belah. Baratieri sent him an order to retire to Mount Rajo, where he would have Ellena on his right. The retreat along the ridge between Belah and Rajo was made amid a storm of fire and incessant charges of the Abyssinians. One of these rushes broke into the Italian column close to Arimondi. The general, wounded in the knee by a bullet, defended himself sword in hand, but was killed just as the charge was repulsed.

Ellena was barely holding his own. Baratieri formed up Arimondi's Brigade on Mount Rajo, but he could see that the battalions, which had lost heavily in the retirement, had little fight left in them. The men, tired with the night march and harassed with thirst under the burning sun, looked exhausted, and the fire with which they answered back the fusillade that poured from Mount Belak was wild and uncontrolled. He made up his mind to begin an ordered retirement while what was left of the two brigades could still keep together, and before he was outflanked and surrounded by a further advance of the enemy.

Brave deeds were done before what was left of the two brigades moved down the eastern slopes of Rajo and Rebbi Arienni into the valley of Gundapta, but it is clear from all the narratives that the men had lost heart, and they did not make anything like the persistent fight that had characterized the resistance of the two other brigades. The attack that raged round them was more furious than ever. Italian officers who survived the day say that the men of Shoa and Amhara seemed actually to have gone mad. They bounded forward, yelling and leaping high in the air, and only firing when they were close up to the rearguard. Losses seemed to produce no effect whatever on them. Before men animated by this battle madness the tired, dispirited soldiers seemed helpless.

The beaten army broke into three columns, each following a different track out of the Gundapta hollow, in crossing which they had left another wide trail of dead behind them. Baratieri rode with the rearguard till the valley was crossed with Ellena near him, and the two generals repeatedly rallied a few companies for a stand, and sometimes were able to bring the guns again into action. The valley would never have been crossed if the pursuers had made a persistent effort to head off the beaten army. They only followed it up and dashed at its flanks, and Menelek and Ras Makonnen soon called off a considerable part of their forces, and most of the artillery, to move westwards and help in the destruction of Dabormida's isolated brigade and a battalion

under De Amicis, that had been cut off with it by the rush over the Spur of Belah.

While the main position was being captured, Dabormida, in the valley of Miriam Shiavitu, anxious though he was at having no tidings from his commander-in-chief, was under the impression that elsewhere the fight was probably going as well as it was in his own immediate front. Until midday he had repelled every attack of the Abyssinians. Then, as they no longer tried to advance, and their fire had slackened into an irregular fusillade that did practically no harm, he ventured to assume the offensive all along his line. On the heights Ragni was met by such a burst of hostile fire that he could not gain any ground, but in the valley itself the Italians twice won their way forward with the bayonet. Dabormida himself led these charges, and before the advancing line of steel the enemy broke so rapidly that only a few of them were bayoneted. The second charge had carried forward the line to a swell of ground that gave a better field of fire for the guns. Dabormida brought forward his artillery. The men greeted him with loud cheers. "*Viva il generale! Viva il re! Vittoria! Vittoria!*" was shouted on all sides. In the midst of this exultation a native servant of one of the officers caught his master by the arm, and, pointing back up the valley, said excitedly, "Look, look, there come the enemy!" Over the rising ground, a mile in rear of the brigade, guns, riflemen, and spearmen were moving down into the valley, and swarms of the

Galla cavalry were riding out northwards to occupy its slopes on that side.

For the first time in the day Dabormida looked anxious. "This is serious," he said to his staff officers. "What has become of the headquarters? They have not sent me a word. They seem to have vanished into space." Instantly he sent Airaghi with two battalions to meet the attack in his rear, and warned Prevasi to protect the flank. He was right in saying that the position had become serious. There were some 30,000 victorious enemies across his line of retreat. With hours of fighting the ammunition supply had run low. And his battalions had lost a terrible proportion of their officers, largely because, as one of the survivors noted in his narrative of the disaster, "from a false sense of pride they persisted in standing during the fight, while their men were lying down and firing." Dabormida, after sending Airaghi to attack the enemy, decided that the only chance of saving the brigade was to fight his way back to Belah. He told his officers that no doubt Baratieri would hold out a hand to him and assist his retreat. He had no idea that by that time Baratieri was himself fighting for the very existence of what was left of the main body on the eastern slopes of the Gundapta valley.

For more than three hours the brigade struggled against overwhelming numbers, painfully winning its way towards the upper end of the valley, where De Amicis was fighting, ringed round with a host of enemies. It was the final failure of the ammuni-

tion that ended the fight, and at last enabled the victorious enemy to break into the lines of both the brigade and the battalion that supported it. The final struggle took place in a deluge of rain and a thunderstorm of tropical violence. By this time Dabormida's Brigade had been broken into fragments. Here the exhausted and despairing men surrendered, and asked for quarter that was not always granted; there they fought in desperate groups among the rocks—with sword, bayonet, and rifle-butt—till numbers told, and the last survivors were killed or taken.

Weeks after, when, during the negotiations for peace, the Italians were allowed to send burial-parties into the Shiavitu valley, they found in more than one instance a dead man still grasping the enemy he had slain in the last death struggle. Few of the officers survived the day. Airaghi, badly wounded, said to his comrades, "I am old, you are still young; save yourselves and leave me." They helped him to seat himself against a tree, with his face towards the enemy, and stood by him till a few minutes later he leaned forward and died.

De Amicis had held his ground at the head of the valley till the brigade joined him. The remnant of his battalion then for a while formed its rearguard. He was last seen disappearing, sword in hand, into the midst of a rush of Ras Alula's men. Where Dabormida himself was killed is not certainly known. For a long time he was in the midst of the rearguard fight, his horse, wounded by a bullet in the

head, still carrying him well. Then he was on foot amongst his men. Some said afterwards they saw him fall dead while trying to mount a mule. But he seems to have been still living, though badly wounded, when the brigade was finally broken. A comrade and friend of his, who accompanied the burial-parties later on, thought he recognized him in a corpse found in a hollow near the east end of the valley. An old native woman, who lived in a hut close by, said it was the body of a "great chief, who wore spectacles and a watch and golden stars" (decorations), who had asked her for water, and then lay down on the ground and died. Plunderers had stripped the body of watch and orders, belt and sword.

A very few of the survivors hid themselves in the hills and straggled into the Italian camp. The brigade was practically annihilated—a sad ending to a day that had begun with hard-won success. The main body, under Baratieri and Ellena, narrowly escaped the same fate. For six miles the pursuit pressed them closely. Weary, hungry, parched with burning thirst, and with only a few cartridges left, the men broke down, discipline gave way: only a few stood by their officers; the rest were a beaten mob. The stragglers were ruthlessly massacred. Officers and men, too exhausted to move another step, turned and waited to have a last shot before the spears of the enemy were upon them. The storm that thundered over the mountain gorges was a relief. The pursuit slackened, and the men

could drink from the torrents that now poured down every ravine. After dark the fugitives, no longer pursued, halted for a brief rest. On the hills behind them they saw red flames rising from every summit for miles. They were bonfires, lighted by Menelek's orders to signal his victory to every valley in sight, and call the mountaineers to insurrection against the white men.

Next day the remnant of the army reached its fortified camp, which was in a few hours abandoned, in order to concentrate at Adi Cajé and shorten the line for convoys and reinforcements. Menelek made no immediate effort to follow up his success. In fact, a considerable part of his army dispersed in the next few days. It was impossible to keep it together and feed it. Only for Baratieri's rash enterprise it would have retired without fighting.

The victors of Adowa are said to have lost in the battle 7,000 killed and 10,000 wounded. This is probably no overestimate, for they had flung themselves in dense masses against breech-loading cannon and repeating rifles. The loss of the vanquished army was terrible. Seventeen thousand officers and men marched out to battle. Of these, 6,678 were killed or wounded, and nearly 3,000 more were taken prisoners—a total loss of nearly 10,000 men. It was the greatest disaster that had ever befallen a civilized army in Africa in modern times.

The particulars of the losses showed that the victors must have massacred large numbers of the wounded

during the fight. In a battle between civilized armies the wounded outnumber the dead by ten to one. At Adowa, on the losing side, there were more than twice as many killed as there were wounded. The Italians had 261 officers and 2,981 men killed, besides 954 more returned as permanently missing. These may be counted as having also been killed, and never found during the subsequent examination of the battlefield by the burial-parties. Their bodies lay in the bush and the mountain ravines out of sight, or had been destroyed by beasts and birds of prey. Of the native soldiers, about 2,000 were killed, making the total killed 6,196.

The wounded, most of whom remained in the hands of the victors, were 31 Italian officers and 439 men, and 958 of the native auxiliaries—a total of only 1,428. The Italian prisoners numbered 1,865. Of the native troops, at least 1,000 were taken, and some estimates make the number 1,500.

More than 400 of the native prisoners were sentenced as rebels to the loss of a foot and a hand, and thus crippled they were turned adrift. Some even of the white prisoners were treated with savage cruelty; many died before the conclusion of peace could restore them to Italy.

Peace was not long delayed. There was no general desire in Italy to avenge Adowa. Crispi's Abyssinian adventure was very unpopular, and the people, horrified at the disaster, protested against any more victims being sacrificed to "the black Sphinx of Africa." Menelek was thus able to secure

the independence of Italian control for which he had fought.

An important though indirect result of Adowa was the beginning of the reconquest of the Soudan. Encouraged by the news of the disaster to the Italians, the Mahdists moved against their garrison at Kassala, and it was feared that this was only the prelude to a general revival of their activity in the valley of the upper Nile. As a counterstroke the British Government decided on the advance into the Dongola province of an Egyptian army under General Sir Herbert (now Lord) Kitchener. This was the first step in the three years of campaigning that culminated in the victory of Omdurman.

## CHAPTER XI.

### OMDURMAN.

*September* 2, 1898.

THE Mohammedans believe that when the last day of the world is approaching a prophet will be sent who will be not only a preacher, but also a conqueror, who will spread the religion and the rule of Islam throughout the world, and who will be known as the "Mahdi"—that is, the "guided one" (guided by God). Hardly a century has passed since the days of Mohammed without the appearance of popular leaders, in one Mohammedan country or another, who claimed to be the expected Mahdi. Such a claim has been a favourite resource for the popular leaders of revolts against oppression. For to pose as a heaven-sent prophet and religious reformer would make their followers believe they were fighting in a holy war.

So in the days when Egypt and the Soudan were falling into a chaos of misgovernment under the rule of Ismail Pasha and his lieutenants, and the oppression of the people on the upper Nile had made them ready for revolt, Mohammed Ahmed,

a religious teacher, an Arab of the Dongola district, declared he was the Mahdi. When he came into conflict with the Government, his successes seemed to the Soudanese almost miraculous and a proof of his claim. In the summer of 1881, with a crowd armed with sticks and a few spears, he surprised and disarmed the troops sent against him. Other victories followed. The revolt of Arabi and the war with England had temporarily paralyzed the Soudan Government. The Mahdi overran whole provinces.

An expedition sent against him under General Hicks, a British officer in the Egyptian service, was destroyed almost to a man. Khartoum was besieged. The chivalrous Gordon had gone there on the eve of the investment, in the hope of saving the situation. He was involved in the fate of the Soudanese capital. A British expedition under Wolseley toiled up the Nile and fought its way across the desert, only to arrive too late. Khartoum had been stormed and Gordon killed on January 26, 1885, during the last stage of the desert campaign.

It was then decided to abandon the Soudan, and for a few years the Mahdi, and his successor Abdullahi, known as the Khalifa, ruled over an empire that extended from the great lakes of the Nile northwards to the Second Cataract, and from the Red Sea to the western borders of Darfur. Its capital was the great city of Omdurman, that had grown up around the village of that name opposite Khartoum, with the domed tomb of the Mahdi for

its central sanctuary. For the first time for centuries the frontiers of civilization had been forced back by a barbarian revolt.

There was a state of intermittent war about Suakin on the Red Sea coast, and more than one British expedition was sent to break up Mahdist gatherings in the district. On the upper Nile, at the foot of the Second Cataract, Wadi Halfa was garrisoned as the frontier fortress of Egypt. Southward the wild rocky desert of the Batn-el-Hagar made the approach of Dervish raiders difficult. The Arab riverside village was converted into a fortress. A rampart of sun-dried bricks, with its flanks resting on the Nile, surrounded the government buildings, barracks, workshops, and hospital. Outlying forts, with Krupp guns and Maxims, looked out over the undulating plain of barren sand between the river and the desert hills. Gunboats patrolled the river up to the cataract, and the telegraph linked the garrison of Egyptian and Soudanese troops with Egypt.

In 1889 the Dervishes had attempted to march past Halfa by the other bank of the Nile, and were routed at Toski. After this there were only insignificant raids on frontier villages by the river. An advanced post, the fort of Sarras, was occupied, and was held by an Egyptian garrison a day's march south of Halfa. Enterprising officers made excursions into the Batn-el-Hagar, and mapped the stony wilderness. To the frontier mess at Halfa there came from time to time rumours of an ad-

vance into the Dervish empire, and talk of the time when Gordon's fate would be avenged. These rumours became more frequent in 1895, when the Austrian Slatin Bey, once a lieutenant of Gordon, then a prisoner of the Mahdi and the Khalifa, made his escape from Omdurman, and told of dissensions in the Dervish camp, and the readiness of many of the tribes to welcome a deliverer from the Khalifa's sway.

The destruction of Baratieri's army at Adowa, the news that the Dervishes were marching on the Italian garrison of Kassala, the fear that the recent defeat of a European army would rouse the Mahdist empire to a new outburst of activity, led the British Government to decide in March 1896 that there should be an advance on the upper Nile. Something must be done to restore the white man's *prestige*. The Dongola province was to be re-occupied. Perhaps this first step forward would open the way to a march on Omdurman and Khartoum.

Then began the series of campaigns, along the river and across the desert, by which Lord Kitchener won a world-wide reputation. He showed what great things could be done with small means. An engineer officer, he made it an engineer's as well as a soldier's war. Hector Macdonald, by a rapid march across the Batn-el-Hagar, seized the crag-girt valley of Akasha on the Nile bank, by the southern edge of the stony desert; and then across the waste of rock and sand the desert railway was

laid by soldier workers, who toiled with their arms piled beside the line, and pickets holding the ridges in front.

When the railway was nearing Akasha, the little army, some 9,000 strong, Egyptians and Soudanese, officered by picked European leaders, concentrated at the advanced post, and, marching by night, attacked and destroyed at dawn, on the first Sunday in June 1896, the Dervish army that held Ferkeh, the gate of the Dongola province. A rapid pursuit by cavalry and camel men cleared the Nile valley of the enemy for 50 miles. Then there was a long halt while again the desert railway crept forward mile by mile, a flotilla was hauled up the rapids of the Second Cataract, and gunboats, built in England and taken to pieces to be packed as cargo, were brought by the railway to an improvised riverside dockyard in the heart of Africa, and were there rebuilt, launched, engined, and armed.

Then the army and the flotilla moved southwards. The batteries of Hafir were passed by the gunboats, the Dervish army retreated without risking another battle, and Dongola was occupied. The gunboats pushed on and cleared the Nile banks of the enemy up to the foot of the Fourth Cataract.

In the following year (1897) another railway was laid across the desert, from Halfa by Murat, to cut off the great bend of the Nile and strike the river at Abu Hamed. Abu Hamed was gallantly stormed by Macdonald, Berber was occupied, and

the railway was continued towards the junction of the Atbara and the Nile.

In the spring of 1898 the Emir Mahmoud took the offensive with a Dervish army, and was defeated on the banks of the Atbara by a mixed British and Egyptian force. In the early autumn the army and flotilla that were to move on Omdurman concentrated under Kitchener's command around Fort Atbara, the railhead at the meeting-place of the Atbara and the Nile. A young Guardsman on his arrival there remarked that it was a long way from Cairo. "It took me ten days to get here, sir," he said to Kitchener. "It has taken most of us two years and a half," replied the general.

The army and flotilla combined under his command represented the most powerful fighting force that had till then been seen in Africa. It was an army of many nations. There were the white soldiers of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the Egyptian fellahin regiments, some of them entirely officered by Arabs and Turks, others with British officers in the higher ranks of command. There were the black Soudanese regiments, negroes and mixed half-negro half-Arab races filling their ranks, which represented most of the tribes of the tropical upper Nile. Then there were the Arab auxiliaries—Ababdeh from the borders of the desert by the First and Second Cataracts; Jaalin from the Bayuda desert, eager for vengeance on the Khalifa, who a year before had massacred their kindred; and Shurikiyeh from the Atbara valley,

under a chief whose father had stood by Gordon at Khartoum.

The regular land forces mustered about 45,000 men. There was a British division under General Gatacre. Its 1st Brigade had been in the Soudan since the previous winter, when Gatacre had led it in person at the storming of Mahmoud's camp on the Atbara. It was now commanded by General Wauchope, and was made up of the 1st Cameron and 1st Seaforth Highlanders, and the 1st Lincolns and 1st Warwick. The 2nd Brigade, which arrived on the eve of the advance, was made up of the 1st Grenadier Guards, the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade, the 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, and the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, the brigadier being General Lyttelton. The Egyptian Division was commanded by General Archibald Hunter, who had seen every campaign on the Nile from the days of the formation of the new Egyptian army; and his four brigades, each of four battalions, were commanded by men who, like himself, though young soldiers, were veterans in desert warfare. Two of the brigades were made up chiefly of Soudanese soldiers, many of whom had had their first experience of war fighting under the banner of the Mahdi or the Khalifa. The organization of the division was this :—

| *1st Brigade.* | *2nd Brigade.* |
|---|---|
| Colonel H. Macdonald. | Colonel Maxwell. |
| 2nd Egyptians. | 8th Egyptians. |
| 9th Soudanese. | 12th Soudanese. |
| 10th Soudanese. | 13th Soudanese |
| 11th Soudanese. | 14th Soudanese. |

| *3rd Brigade.* | *4th Brigade.* |
|---|---|
| Colonel Lewis. | Colonel Collinson. |
| 3rd Egyptians. | 1st Egyptians. |
| 4th Egyptians. | 5th Egyptians. |
| 7th Egyptians. | 17th Egyptians. |
| 15th Egyptians. | 18th Egyptians. |

There was a regiment of British cavalry, the 21st Lancers, setting out on their first campaign, and eager to do some stirring deed. The Egyptian cavalry were ten squadrons of Lancers under Colonel Broadwood, and there was Tudway's camel corps of eight campanies of riflemen. A horse battery of six 9½-pounder Krupp guns was attached to the Egyptian cavalry, who had also some Maxims. Maxim detachments (including a Maxim battery manned by the Royal Irish Fusiliers) were also with the infantry. The Egyptian field artillery had four batteries each of six new Maxim-Nordenfelt quick-firing guns, throwing a 12½-pound shell. The British artillery was made up of a battery of six 15-pounder field guns (32nd Royal Field Artillery), a battery of six 5-inch howitzers (37th Royal Field Artillery), and a detachment of garrison artillery with two 40-pounder siege guns. The howitzers and siege guns had with them a supply of the new high explosive lyddite shells, of the destructive power of which terrible things were told.

Besides the 44 guns with the land forces, there was a formidable array of quick-firing guns and Maxims mounted on the gunboats, which were also provided with high power electric searchlights.

The first move was made by detachments, partly

by marching, partly by river transport, to a concentration camp at Wad Hamed, below the Shabluka cataract. The regular troops were massed on the left bank of the river; the Arab irregulars, under Colonel Stuart Wortley, on the other side. A huge flotilla of gunboats, steamers, and barges and sailing boats lay on the wide waters of the Nile. August 24th was fixed for the start of the march on Omdurman. Twenty-one days' provisions had been collected for the campaign, which was to be short and sharp. Two days' rations were distributed to the troops on the 24th. The flotilla conveyed the rest, and was to serve as a moving supply magazine from which distributions would be made to the various units on shore.

On the 23rd the Sirdar Kitchener reviewed his army, and the British, Egyptian, and Soudanese regiments, formed in line in the desert with a front of two miles, presented a magnificent spectacle. It was a force with which a leader might promise to "go anywhere and do anything." Colonel Wingate, of the Intelligence Department, and his right-hand man, Slatin Pasha, had information from Omdurman that the Khalifa was gathering every available fighting man, and meant to await the attack at or near Omdurman, where he counted on assembling at least 60,000 warriors under his black banner.

The march through the desert, round the hills by the Shabluka cataract, was made by detachments, and the army was again concentrated south of the cataract on the evening of August 27th. Omdurman

was now only 35 miles away in a direct line, though the march by the river bank would add slightly to the distance. From the summit of Jebel Royan, the mountain at the head of the cataract on the right bank, where a look-out and signal station had been established, the telescope showed a white spot just on the far horizon. It was the dome of the Mahdi's tomb in the midst of the capital of the Khalifa. Stuart Wortley, with his 2,500 Arabs, was on the river bank near Jebel Royan. He had just been joined by nearly a hundred deserters from the enemy's camp (a party of Batahin Arabs with their chief), and his scouts had come on the track of retiring Dervish patrols. It was afterwards ascertained that the Khalifa had kept all his fighting men near Omdurman, except a party of about 200 horsemen, whom he sent forward to watch the Sirdar's advance.

The army now moved onward by short marches, covered by a screen formed by the mounted troops. On August 31st it halted just 15 miles from Omdurman. The camp was on the northern slope of the hollow of Wadi Suetne, a valley covered with low-growing thorn scrub. Beyond were the ridges of the Kerreri Hills, rising only a few hundred feet above the desert. It was known that from their southern slopes an open plain of hard sand and gravel stretched along the Nile bank to the gates of the Khalifa's capital. During the day the cavalry had sighted and driven in his scouts, and the gunboats had shelled and broken up their camp in a

hollow of the Kerreri Hills. Next day might perhaps witness the great battle. In any case within twenty-four hours the expedition would be before Omdurman.

On the morning of September 1st the Sirdar formed his army in battle array, and marched southward over the Kerreri Hills. The British division was on the left, near the Nile. Then came the Egyptian infantry brigades, and on the extreme right, guarding the desert flank, the Egyptian mounted troops. The gunboats steamed ahead on the river, and on the right bank Stuart Wortley advanced with his motley crowd of Arab "friendlies"—known to the British soldiers as the "Skallywags." As the Kerreri ridge was passed the 21st Lancers were sent forward in the plain beyond, and one of their parties occupied the isolated hill of Jebel Surgham in its midst, and established there a heliograph signal station. Away to the right Broadwood advanced with his squadrons, crossed the hollow of Khor Shambat, and reached the hills that look down on the land front of Omdurman. Those who now saw the sacred city of the Mahdi for the first time were astonished at its enormous extent. It stretched for some six miles along the riverside, a wilderness of low, flat-roofed houses, high over which rose the white dome of the Mahdi's tomb, glittering in the sun.

That dome was soon to be the target of British artillery. Stuart Wortley's "friendlies," marching by the farther bank of the Nile, had driven parties

of Dervishes out of the riverside villages, and finally seized Halfiya, a village behind the first of the islands below the confluence of the two Niles. From this point the dome of the tomb was a little more than a mile away. At Halfiya the howitzer battery was landed from barges, and, taking the dome as its target, began to throw its heavy lyddite shells into Omdurman. At the same time the gunboats steamed up between the island and the northern end of the city, and came into action against the enemy's batteries along its river front. The Mahdists fought their guns bravely, but they were soon silenced. Huge breaches were blown in the river wall by the fire of the gunboats, and the howitzers, with their heavy lyddite shells, wrecked the dome, and did considerable damage to the buildings around it.

Omdurman was crowded with the tens of thousands whom the Khalifa had mustered for the battle. While the bombardment was still in progress he ordered them to move out into the open and advance against the Sirdar's army, promising them speedy victory, and telling them that it had been prophesied that the plain of Kerreri would be white with the skulls of their enemies.

The Dervish army, more than 50,000 strong, poured out of the city, and formed in battle array facing towards the north, on the sandy slopes between Omdurman and the hills where Broadwood had halted. It was about eleven o'clock when the Khalifa began to advance towards the Khor

Shambat hollow. Mr. Winston Churchill, who was then a lieutenant attached to the 21st Lancers, has given a striking description of the appearance of the great host as seen from near Jebel Surgham.* "Suddenly," he says, "the whole black line began to move. Behind it other immense masses and lines of men appeared over the crest; and while we watched, amazed by the wonder of the sight, the whole face of the slope became black with swarming savages. Four miles from end to end, and as it seemed in five great divisions, this mighty army advanced swiftly. The whole side of the hill seemed to move. Between the masses horsemen galloped continually; before them many patrols dotted the plain; above them waved hundreds of banners; and the sun, glinting on many thousand hostile spear points, spread a sparkling cloud. It was perhaps the impression of a lifetime; nor do I expect ever again to see such an awe-inspiring or formidable sight. . . . A strong detachment of the *mulazemim*, or guard, was extended in front of the centre. Ali Wad Helu, with his bright green flag, prolonged the line to the left; and his 5,000 warriors soon began to reach out towards the Egyptian cavalry. The centre and main force of the army was composed of the regular troops, formed in squads, under Osman Sheik-ed-Din † and Osman Azrak. This great body comprised 12,000 black riflemen, and about 13,000 black and Arab

* "The River War," vol. ii. p. 87.

† The son of the Khalifa.

spearmen. In their midst rose the large dark green flag which the Sheik-ed-Din had adopted. The Khalifa with his own bodyguard, about 2,000 strong, followed the centre. In rear of all marched Yakub with the black flag and 13,000 men—nearly all swordsmen and spearmen, who, with those extended in front of the army, constituted the guard. The right wing was formed by the brigade of the Khalifa Sherif, consisting of 2,000 Danagla tribesmen, whose principal ensign was a broad red flag. Osman Digna, with about 1,700 Hadendoa, guarded the extreme right and the flank nearest Omdurman, and his fame needed no flag. Such was the great army which now moved swiftly towards the watching squadrons; and these, pausing on the sandy ridge, pushed out a fringe of tentative patrols, as if to assure themselves that what they saw was real."

Before the steady advance of the Dervishes the cavalry began to fall back on the main body, which as yet could have no sight of the enemy. The Sirdar had halted near the huts of the village of Egeiga, on the bank of the Nile, between the Kerreri Hills and Jebel Surgham. The troops were formed round and outside the little group of mud-built houses in a semicircle, convex towards the desert plain in front, and with the wings thrown back to the river bank, which here rose steeply from the waterside with a narrow stretch of beach a few feet below it. The British division was in line on the left; three Egyptian brigades formed the centre and right. Collinson's

Brigade was in reserve inside the semicircle. In the intervals between the brigades and battalions the artillery and the Maxim guns were posted.

The heliograph on Jebel Surgham flashed and flickered out in dots and dashes the news that the enemy were advancing in force, and Colonel Martin of the 21st Lancers, while his men were retiring, sent Lieutenant Winston Churchill galloping back to give the Sirdar some details. Churchill reported that the Dervish army was then about four miles away, and, if they continued their advance, would be attacking in another hour. The Sirdar was quite calm and confident. "We want nothing better," he said. "We have a good field of fire here. They may as well come to-day as to-morrow."

But the Dervish army came no farther than the long hollow of Khor Shambat. There they halted in masses as they stood, and prepared to bivouac. Their cavalry patrols during the late hours of the afternoon exchanged a few shots with the scouts sent out by the 21st Lancers beyond Jebel Surgham. Broadwood had drawn in his squadrons, the horse battery and the camel corps, to the base of the Kerreri Hills on the right of the Sirdar's array. As darkness came on the men of the Anglo-Egyptian army lay down to sleep where they stood. The British division had covered its front with a zareba hedge, a mass of thorn bushes cut down and piled together. Hunter's Soudanese and Egyptian battalions were content to throw up a low parapet of sand and gravel. Their officers had longer experi-

ence of desert warfare than those of the white battalions. The low parapet gave some protection against bullets, and enabled the men behind it to fire kneeling. The zareba hedge forced its defenders to stand while firing.

It was fully expected that there would be a night attack. It looked as if the Khalifa had marched out during the day in order to be within easy striking distance as soon as the darkness gathered. But it was only a partial darkness after all, for the Sirdar had timed his advance so as to approach Omdurman in the period of moonlit nights, and the full moon was shining in all its splendour in a cloudless, star-spangled sky, with the brightness characteristic of the tropical night in the desert. It silvered the wide expanse of sand sloping gently upwards from the riverside, and through the sheen of moonlight came the long beams of brighter rays from the searchlights of the gunboats, which swept the desert, startling the wild warriors, who saw in it some strange menace of magical power.

By this double light keen-eyed sentinels and scouts watched the expanse of sand and gravel in front of the Sirdar's position. Hour after hour went by, and still there was no attack. The Khalifa had lost his best chance. It was only just before the sun rose that he broke up his bivouacs and formed his huge army in battle array.

At half-past four, even before the twilight began to whiten the sky far away on the other side of the Nile, bugle and trumpet, fife and drum, sounded

the reveillé in the Sirdar's lines. The men stood to their arms in the darkness. The rush might come in the dangerous hour before the dawn. But all was quiet in front, and as the twilight began to dim the stars British and Egyptian cavalry patrols were sent out through the darkness to have a sight of the enemy as soon as there was light enough to distinguish objects at a little distance.

Lieutenant Churchill, anxious to see all that was to be seen, in his double capacity of a cavalry scout and the war correspondent of a London paper, was with the party that rode up to the crest of Jebel Surgham. Beyond could be seen the lines and masses of the Dervish army, looking in the half-light like "dark blurs and streaks relieved and diversified with an odd-looking shimmer of light from the spear points."

As the sun rose, the Mahdists began to move forward, still hidden from the Sirdar's position by a long swell of sandy ground between Surgham and the Kerreri Hills. Only the advanced cavalry scouts saw this first stage of the enemy's advance, and Mr. Churchill's graphic description of the impression it produced upon these watchers on the Surgham ridge is well worth a full quotation :*—

"As it became broad daylight—that is to say, about ten minutes to six—I suddenly became aware that all the masses were in motion and advancing swiftly. Their emirs galloped about and before their ranks; scouts and patrols scattered them-

* "The River War," vol. ii. p. 107 *et seq.*

selves all over the front. Then they began to cheer. They were still a mile away from the hill, and were concealed from the Sirdar's army by the folds of the ground. The noise of the shouting was heard, albeit faintly, by the troops down by the river; but to us, watching on the hill, a tremendous roar came up in waves of intense sound, like the tumult of a rising wind and sea before a storm. In spite of the confidence which I felt in the weapons of civilization—for all doubts had dispersed with the darkness—the formidable aspect of this host of implacable savages, hurrying eagerly to the attack, provoked a feeling of loneliness, which was shared, I think, by the rest of the little patrol. . . . Although the Dervishes were steadily advancing, a belief that their musketry was inferior encouraged a nearer view, and we trotted round the south-west slopes of Surgham Hill until we reached the sandhills on the enemy's side. Thence the whole array was visible in minute detail. It seemed that every single man of all the thousands could be examined separately. The pace of their march was fast and steady, and it was evident that it would not be safe to remain long among the sandhills. Yet the wonder of the scene exercised a dangerous fascination, and for a while we tarried.

"The emblems of the more famous emirs were easily distinguishable. On the extreme left the chiefs and soldiers of the bright green flag gathered under Ali Wad Helu; between this and the centre the large dark green flag of Osman Sheik-ed-Din rose

above a dense mass of spearmen, preceded by long lines of warriors armed presumably with rifles; over the centre, commanded by Yakub, the sacred black banner of the Khalifa floated high and remarkable; while on the right a great square of Dervishes was arrayed under an extraordinary number of white flags, amid which the red ensign of Sherif was almost hidden. All the pride and might of the Dervish empire was massed on this last great day of its existence. Riflemen who had helped to destroy Hicks, spearmen who had charged at Abu Klea, Baggara fresh from raiding the Shillooks, warriors who had besieged Khartoum—all marched inspired by the memories of former triumphs and embittered by the knowledge of late defeats, to chastise the impudent and accursed invaders."

The front of the great array was about five miles. The left stretched out towards the Kerreri Hills; the centre, with the black flag, marched directly upon Jebel Surgham; the right moved so that it would presently sweep round to the south of it. Under a splutter of fire from the enemy's nearest riflemen the Lancer patrols galloped from their point of observation and withdrew with the regiment to the low bank of the river, behind the left flank of the Sirdar's line.

The Khalifa had dragged out with him three small Krupp guns. Two of these, placed near the northern shoulder of Jebel Surgham, fired the first shots of the battle as the Dervish array topped the long swell of sand between the hill and the Kerreri

ridges, and the white flags came pouring round the south side. The Dervish shells fell short and did not burst ; they only threw up great splashes of sand in front of the British division. At once the challenge was answered. The Sirdar's artillery thundered out from his battle line and from the high-placed quick-firers of the gunboats, that lay like floating castles of steel on the flanks of his position. The range was about a mile and a half. A storm of shells burst over the front of the advancing array, and every bursting shell strewed the ground with dead and wounded. But on through the deadly shower the enemy came, a long white line topped with hundreds of fluttering banners, and flowing like a tide over the crest of the sandy slope, with the huge wave of shouting men pressing on behind it.

The Khalifa had sent nearly 30,000 men forward for the first attack. On the right, Sherif with the white flags, about 6,000 strong, moved over and round the Jebel Surgham height ; in the centre, some 8,000 under Osman Azrak marched directly on the Sirdar's position ; on the left, Osman Sheik-ed-Din, with the strongest of the three corps—a force estimated at some 15,000—made for the Kerreri ridges, with the intention of moving through the broken ground and falling on the right flank of the Egyptians. The Khalifa had a reserve of more than 20,000 men, whom he held back for later eventualities. His idea probably was that, if the first rush failed, the enemy would leave their fortified position to pursue the beaten Dervishes, and he

could then fall upon them by surprise in the open desert. Behind Jebel Surgham he halted with the black flag and some 17,000 of his best fighting men, including his picked guard, the Mulazemim, and the Baggara cavalry. Over the ridge of Um Mutragan, a prolongation of the Kerreri range, he sent Ali Wad Helu with some 5,000 more. In recent campaigns the Dervishes had stood on the defensive and been defeated. Their earlier victories had all been won by the headlong rush with spear and sword. The Khalifa was this day trying to revert to the old aggressive tactics, without having as yet any clear idea of the terrible power of the new weapons opposed to him.

As Osman Azrak and Sherif's thousands came on there was a splutter of rifle fire from their front, but the range was too long for their old Remington rifles. At first the only return fire was that of the artillery ashore and afloat. But as the advancing wave of spears came within a mile and a half the Grenadier Guards on the left opened fire with their long-ranging Lee-Metfords. Battalion after battalion joined in along the front of the British line. The firing was by volleys ; then the Maxims began to shower out their bullets ; finally, as the range shortened to under a thousand yards, the Soudanese and Egyptian battalions were able to use their Martinis. Twelve thousand rifles were pouring their bullets into the immense target offered by the charging Dervishes. The batteries and the gunboats were covering their front with a hail of bursting shells and descending

showers of shrapnel balls, and the Maxims were pouring out their streams of lead. Through this storm of death the Dervishes still came on. "I am sorry for those brave men!" exclaimed the Italian attaché, Count Calderari, as he watched the desert warriors thus rushing to destruction.

Meanwhile on the enemy's left the Sheik-ed-Din's men had reached the Kerreri Hills. The thousands who followed his green standard had a less formidable task, and at first could flatter themselves that they had a certain measure of success. Colonel Broadwood had with him his ten squadrons of native lancers—all led by British officers—Tudway's mounted riflemen of the Camel Corps, and the horse battery, and Maxims. He met the rush on the first of the Kerreri ridges. The Camel Corps were in line on the right, partly sheltered by rocks and boulders. On the left were the six guns and some dismounted troopers. The rest of the cavalry was massed behind the left flank in the hollow between the two ridges.

Kitchener, from the main position, had seen the enormous mass of the Dervish left turning to the Kerreri Hills, and had sent word to Broadwood to bring in his mounted troops to the right of the infantry, where they would be protected by the fire of the battle line. Broadwood had been serving for years with his chief, and the two men thoroughly understood and trusted each other. The cavalry commander therefore ventured to send back word that he thought he could do better by acting on his

own, and keeping the Sheik-ed-Din's 15,000 men occupied for a while at a distance from the main battlefield. It was a daring resolve, but Broadwood and his men, in the days before the battle of the Atbara, had already had the experience of successfully playing with thousands of wild tribesmen in the open desert.

The steady fire of his line of rifles, carbines, Maxims, and Krupp guns checked the first rush of the enemy. But a great mass of Dervishes began to pour up the hills and round the right flank of the Camel Corps, and there was imminent danger of the line being overwhelmed and rolled up. The order was given to retreat. The Camel Corps mounted and rode down the stony valley between the two ridges, while the cavalry and the horse battery crossed it to the second ridge, where the guns came into action again. But disregarding this fire, the Dervishes rushed down the hills after Tudway's camel men, and on the stony ground the tribesmen moved much faster than the camels, and it looked as if the Camel Corps would be surrounded and massacred. But at this moment the gunboat *Melik* came to the rescue. She steamed down to a point whence her guns swept the whole length of the valley down which the Dervishes were racing after the Camel Corps. Her quick-firers and Maxims—manned by picked men of the Royal Marine Artillery—poured a rapid fire into the enemy, and as a second gunboat appeared, they turned from the now dangerous pursuit of the Camel Corps, leaving the ground strewn with dead. Tudway led his

men along the river bank to the flank of the battle line, where he sent some of them to join in the defence on the right of Lewis's Brigade.

Foiled of what they had thought an easy prey, the Sheik-ed-Din's men now turned to attack Broadwood's cavalry. He might have retired like the Camel Corps by the riverside way that the gunboats kept open, but after firing a few shells at the enemy he led his men down the north slope of the hills, and reached the wide expanse of scrub-covered desert that extended to and beyond the hollow of Wadi Suetne. Here he had free scope for the swift and easy movements of his mounted men, and alternately making a stand and again retiring, he drew the enemy three miles away from the battlefield. With his few hundred lances and carbines and his six guns he was keeping fully occupied 15,000 riflemen and spearmen. There is no better proof of the high state of discipline the native Egyptian troops had reached under their white leaders than the success of Broadwood's daring manœuvre.

The Dervishes showed reckless courage, and moved at a speed no civilized troops could have kept up for long. Some of their rushes were very dangerous. Once they were checked only by Major Mahon* charging into the nearest of them at the head of his squadron. The Dervishes scored one momentary

* This young cavalry officer had served with distinction on the upper Nile in the campaigns of 1896–97–98. He was afterwards famous as the commander of the force that relieved Mafeking during the South African War.

success. Two of the guns of the horse battery stuck fast in a soft place, and were rushed; but before the gunners abandoned them to the enemy, they removed and carried off the breech-blocks, so as to render them useless.

At last Osman Sheik-ed-Din realized that he could not run down his agile opponents, and that he was only suffering useless loss, and being led far from the real battlefield. He rallied the tribesmen and began to withdraw towards the Kerreri Hills, followed for a while by the shells of the horse battery. Broadwood then marched back along the river bank, picking up on his way the two guns that had been temporarily lost.

Meanwhile the great frontal attack of the Dervishes had ended in disastrous failure. The marvel is that it lasted as long as it did, before the brave men who formed its successive lines and rushes realized that it was hopeless. Wave after wave of fresh men moved forward as the front of the attack crumbled under the tornado of bullet and shell. Some of the mounted emirs who rode in the foremost ranks seemed to have a charmed life, and they brought their followers on nearer and nearer to the Sirdar's battle front. As the range shortened, the fire of the Dervish riflemen, who mingled with the leading spearmen, began to produce some small effect. Most of the bullets flew high, but here and there an officer or a man was hit. The first to be wounded was Corporal Mackenzie of the Seaforths, who was hit in the leg by a bullet that did not penetrate.

He had the wound dressed, and returned to his post in the line. Then a private of the Lincolns dropped dead, shot through the head. The casualties became more frequent when some hundreds of the black riflemen found shelter in a long hollow of the sand about five hundred yards away, where they lay down and shot steadily from cover. Captain Caldecott of the Warwicks was killed. Captain Bagot of the Guards and Captain de Rougemont of the Artillery were wounded. The group of war correspondents, who watched the fight from the rear of the British line, had two casualties in their small number. Colonel Rhodes (the brother of Cecil Rhodes), acting as correspondent of the *Times*, was severely wounded in the shoulder; and the veteran Charles Williams of the *Daily Chronicle* had a narrow escape of being killed, a bullet scoring the side of his head just below the temple—the third wound he had received in action during his long and adventurous career.

As soon as the Sirdar saw that the impetus of the enemy's onset was being checked, he swung the right of his line forward from the river, so as to give fuller effect to the fire of Lewis's Brigade and the batteries attached to it. In the front of the native troops, armed with the Martini, the main rush of the Dervishes came up to a point about 300 yards away. In front of the British battalions, who shot with the small-bore magazine rifle, no considerable body of Dervishes got nearer than 500 yards. But a few brave men were killed much closer to the line. In

front of the 1st British Brigade a splendidly-built young Arab dashed on alone with his spear at the charge until he dropped at 200 yards. In front of Maxwell's native brigade a gray-bearded standard-bearer and five spearmen came on through the shower of bullets, and fell one by one, till at last the old man dropped dead less than 150 yards from the front. Long after the other mounted emirs had disappeared a chief dressed in a new white jibba, bright with many coloured patches, was still to be seen riding in the foremost rank of the attack. He fell only when it was nearing its final collapse. His body was identified as that of Osman Azrak, one of the most famous of the Mahdist leaders. He had fought in all the Dervish campaigns on the Nile, and his name had long been a terror in connection with daring raids on the frontier.

The fire from the Anglo-Egyptian lines had been so rapid and continuous that rifles became too hot for the men to hold. Grasping them by the leathern slings, the soldiers in the first line would exchange them for those of the reserve companies. The Maxims had repeatedly to cease fire in order to cool down after blowing off in jets of steam all the water in their casings. There was abundance of ammunition. Reserves of it lay close at hand in barges by the river bank.

At half-past seven the attack began to slacken. There was a last rush towards the front held by the Egyptians; and then, shortly before eight o'clock, the last of the spearmen disappeared over the long

ridge by Jebel Surgham. They carried off numbers of their wounded with them. Some of the riflemen held on in their sheltering hollow, but they were driven from their cover by the shells of the artillery. Then the firing ceased, and among the men in the ranks there was a feeling that the battle had been won. The losses of those who held the main position had been trifling. It had been for them more like a slaughter of the enemy than a battle.

But the hardest fighting of the day was yet to come. The Sirdar knew quite well that, besides the remnant of those he had defeated, there were thousands of enemies still in front of him, notably those who were returning from the unsuccessful attempt to overwhelm the mounted troops. It seemed likely that, having failed in the great attack, the Khalifa would lead back his warriors to defend Omdurman; and Kitchener, though he knew he was taking a risk, decided to break up his defensive battle array at once and march on the city, in order to seize it before the Dervishes could rally to its defence. If they got there first, its capture would mean prolonged and costly street fighting.

While the brigades that had formed the battle line were wheeling out on to the expanse of sand in their front and forming for the advance southwards, Colonel Martin of the 21st Lancers was ordered to take his regiment out towards Jebel Surgham, and clear the ground between the hill and the river of any parties of the enemy, in order to prepare the way for the march of the infantry.

The Lancers had since early morning been only spectators of the fight, and officers and men were all eager for action.

As they rode out towards the hill, with a couple of patrols well in advance of them, they looked very different from a Lancer regiment on home service. Khaki had replaced the brilliant uniforms, a clumsy brown helmet the swagger Polish *schapka*, and their mounts were wiry little Arab horses, that made the men look too big for them. But every man and horse was thoroughly fit, and the squadrons moved and changed formation with the accuracy of a machine.

On one of the spurs that ran out from Surgham the regiment halted and dismounted to rest the horses, while the patrols examined the ground to the southward. They saw great crowds of fugitives streaming away towards the city. It was half-past eight, and the day had become intensely hot, and here and there the desert mirage confused the view over the sun-scorched sands. "The mirages blurred and distorted the picture, so that some of the routed Arabs walked in air and some through water, and all were misty and unreal." Stragglers in small parties were making their way to the river, and one of the patrols reported that in this direction a long hollow, running down from the south side of Jebel Surgham to the Nile, was held by about 1,000 of the enemy. If these were swept away the Lancers could strike in upon the Dervish line of retreat, and would clear the way for the southward march of the infantry.

The body of Dervishes in the hollow were some of Osman Digna's men—Hadendoa tribesmen from the Red Sea coast district—the "Fuzzie-wuzzies," to give them the name that the soldiers who fought in the Suakin campaigns invented in allusion to their way of dressing the hair. Their position was clearly seen from the gunboats, which were within easy range, and one wonders why no effort was made to shell them out of their cover. Colonel Martin considered that his orders to "clear the front" implied that he should attack them; and at 8.25 the regiment mounted, moved down the slope towards the river, formed column of troops, and at a point about 250 yards north of the hollow formed line facing it.

The ground west of the hollow was concealed from view by a ridge of rock jutting out from the hill, and behind this screen Dervish reinforcements had been joining the Hadendoas while the Lancers were forming for the charge. As the line advanced all that was visible of the enemy was a party of about 100 riflemen firing from the edge of the hollow. Their fire was wild—high and almost harmless—and the Lancers galloped through it and charged into the dense mass of sword and spear men, who awaited their onset without flinching.

It is a very rare experience for cavalry to crash into an unbroken array of infantry. There was a tremendous shock. More than a score of men were dismounted, and the Dervishes were rolled over in heaps. But they held together, and began to fight with the Lancers, who were now in among them,

struggling through the mob of enemies and dragging them with them. There was a mêlée that lasted about two minutes. Most of the Lancers were so wedged in the crowd that all they could do was to hold together in small parties and urge their horses forward. Their lances were useless after the first shock. Around them the fanatic tribesmen surged in a dense crowd, those who were nearest to the horsemen stabbing and hamstringing the horses, striking at the riders with sword or spear, or trying to drag them down from the saddle. Then the Lancers broke through, and came struggling out of the press, some dismounted, many wounded. As they got clear of the enemy they faced about and re-formed.

In the two minutes' fight five officers, 65 men, and 119 horses had been killed or wounded. Colonel Martin had come through untouched, though he had led the charge without drawing either sword or pistol. Major Wyndham had his horse killed, and fought his way out on foot. Lieutenant Molyneux had his horse shot dead as he rode into the hollow. He fell among the enemy, but regained his feet, and shot a Dervish who attacked him. As he did so another Dervish slashed his arm with a sword, and he dropped his revolver. Wounded and disarmed, he was trying to struggle out of the crowd, and had nearly reached safety, when four spearmen barred his way. At this moment up rode Private Byrne, already badly wounded by a bullet. He had turned back on seeing the officer's peril. He

rode at and scattered the spearmen, receiving a lance wound in the chest as he did so, and then brought Molyneux in holding by his stirrup leather. Byrne was covered with blood from his two wounds; but he took his place in the ranks, and at first refused to fall out, begging to be allowed "to have another go at them."

Lieutenant Nesham had a wonderful escape. His bridle was cut, his left hand nearly severed by a sword-cut, his helmet hacked down to the scalp, and his thigh pierced by a spear. The Dervishes caught him by the legs to pull him down; but this drove the spurs in, and his horse, though already badly wounded, made a wild bound that shook the assailants off and carried him out of the throng. Lieutenant Grenfell, the son of Lord Grenfell, had his horse killed. He fought on foot, pistol in hand; but when he had fired the six shots he fell riddled with spear wounds. When the regiment rallied, Captain Kenna, who had already gallantly helped Major Wyndham to escape, rode back into the Dervish swarm, followed by Lieutenant de Montmorency and Corporal Swarbrick, to save young Grenfell, if he still lived, or recover the body if he were dead. They found Grenfell lying dead, pierced with many wounds, on the slope of the hollow, and some Dervishes hacking at the body with their swords. They drove them off, and were placing the body on a horse when the animal bolted. Then a strong party of Dervishes rushed at them, and they had to abandon their attempt and rejoin the regiment.

Lieutenant Winston Churchill was one of the few officers who came out of the charge unwounded and with his horse untouched, and with even his clothing and saddlery uninjured. He gives a very interesting account of his sensations during the critical two minutes :—

"The whole scene flickered exactly like a cinematograph picture; and, besides, I remember no sound. The event seemed to pass in absolute silence. The yells of the enemy, the shouts of the soldiers, the firing of many shots, the clashing of sword and spear, were unnoticed by the senses, unregistered by the brain. Several others say the same."

The Dervishes rallied in their hollow after the mêlée, defiant and exultant. Two hundred yards away the Lancers had re-formed in line, about 200 effective men, and even of these many were wounded, and numbers of horses still in the ranks had been badly hurt. All were eager to charge again, but Colonel Martin felt that another mêlée amid such stubborn foes might mean the destruction of the regiment. He formed column of troops, and under a spatter of fire from the enemy he led his men round to the ground between the Dervishes and the river. There he halted, and sent forward a firing line of dismounted men with carbines to drive the enemy out of the hollow. This proved effective, and the enemy soon retreated behind the shoulder of Jebel Surgham, leaving a very few dead behind them. The easy and rapid success of this attack suggests that the charge—brilliant feat of arms as it was—might be considered an unnecessary sacrifice.

To the leading brigades of the infantry, forming for the march on Omdurman, all that had been seen of the Lancers' charge was a great cloud of sand and dust shooting up towards the sky. The British Division had formed with its left towards the Nile, facing south. Six hundred yards to its right rear was Maxwell's Brigade. Next, and still farther from the river, came Lewis, and another 600 yards farther back Macdonald's Brigade of one Egyptian and three black battalions. Nearer the river marched Collinson's reserve brigade with the baggage. Macdonald was farthest out into the desert and nearest to the hills, behind which it was known that great masses of the enemy had disappeared. So General Hunter, who arranged the details of the movement for the Egyptian Division, strengthened Macdonald with three batteries of artillery and eight Maxim guns.

The army, thus re-formed in a great echelon of brigades to move on the city, had hardly begun its march when the battle suddenly blazed out again, more furiously than ever. There was first a crackle of firing from the crest of Jebel Surgham, which the enemy's riflemen had reoccupied. Then a great wave of fighting men, with war-drums beating, horns sounding, and rifles firing from their front, swept round the north shoulder of the hill, rushing in an eager onset towards Maxwell's Brigade. On the left of the attack the charging line prolonged itself farther and farther along the rise of the desert towards the Kerreri Hills; on the right, a mass of spears topped the crest of Surgham. High over the centre

of the advancing Dervishes towered the Khalifa's black standard. He was charging with his own picked guard, with Yakub's reserve division, the Baggara horsemen, and all that had been rallied from the first attack.

The onset was something of a surprise, but it was met with disciplined alertness and steadiness by British, Egyptians, and Soudanese. Maxwell was nearest to the rush. He swung round his brigade into line, facing west, and opened a rolling fire from cannon and rifle. Away to his right, separated from him by nearly half a mile of desert, Macdonald had as promptly formed his fighting line, bringing his three batteries of quick-firing guns into action with deadly effect against the Dervish left. Lewis moved up his brigade into the wide gap between Maxwell and Macdonald. The British brigades began to form on Maxwell's left. The Khalifa's onset was more dangerous than the morning attack; for in front of it there was now not a close-formed line, shoulder to shoulder, with its flanks on the river, and a wide field of fire in front, but a hastily-formed line with wide gaps between its units, and its flanks "in air," and in front only a few hundred yards to the points at which the attack broke from cover.

But splendid as was the Mahdist rush, the fire of the defence stopped and shattered it. As its first fierce impulse died away a new danger appeared. Over the western ridges of Kerreri came another host of enemies—the 20,000 who followed the green standards of Ali Wad Helu and Osman Sheik-ed-Din.

Their attack was meant, no doubt, to be simultaneous with that of the Khalifa and Yakub. It had come too late; but even so, Macdonald's Brigade on the extreme right was in deadly peril. For while he was still engaged with Yakub's left—his brigade facing westward—this new army came pouring over the hills on his right flank. It looked as if his four native battalions would be overwhelmed and swept away. The veteran Highlander met the danger with consummate coolness and skill. Still firing with part of his line on Yakub, he gradually changed front, sending one by one his battalions, batteries, and Maxim sections to form on a new front to the north to face the green flag attack. At first he was fighting on two fronts, and the complex manœuvre of the change of front was carried out under a sharp fire, and at a moment when all saw the possibility of disaster, with the clockwork precision of a drill parade. In the midst of the crash of the conflict Macdonald was so thoroughly self-possessed that he checked the officers of one of his battalions for beginning to follow another in the change of front before he gave them the order to move.

There were many losses in the ranks from the heavy fire of the advancing Dervishes. Lieutenant-Colonel Sloggett of the Army Medical Corps was shot down while giving first aid to a wounded man.* On the right the Dervish rush was stopped at 400 yards;

* At first he was reported to be dead, but though the bullet had touched the base of the heart, he recovered, and was doing military duty again a few months later.

but on the left it came to perilously close quarters, so close that men were hit by spears hurled by the foremost of the enemy. Lieutenant Smyth of the Royals, Macdonald's staff officer, was wounded in this way. But just as it seemed that it would come to a desperate hand-to-hand fight of bayonet against spear the Dervishes began to give way.

Help was coming from various quarters, but Macdonald had won his splendid fight before the first reinforcements actually reached him. The Camel Corps rode up on his right. The Sirdar had sent Wauchope's British Brigade to his help, and the Lincoln Regiment, doubling out in advance, arrived in time to send some rapid volleys from its magazine rifles into the breaking ranks of the enemy. The gunboats fired some long-ranging shells into the rearward supports of the attack. Collinson's Brigade marched up from the river, eager to have a share in the fight; and Broadwood's squadrons, formed in line, rode over the broken Kerreri slopes.

The battle was now won. Ali Wad Helu was carried off badly wounded, and his followers and the Sheik-ed-Din's men were driven into the desert. Maxwell, with Lyttelton's British Brigade on his left, had assumed the offensive, stormed the Surgham crest, and routed the Khalifa's division. Lewis had charged at Yakub. The emir was killed and his tribesmen scattered, and the sacred black standard of Mahdism was captured by Major Hickman and the 15th Soudanese after a hard struggle, in which

many of the Khalifa's veterans fell fighting to the death in its defence.

Hickman carried the black flag to the Sirdar, who had ridden with his staff to the top of one of the spurs of Surgham. It was unfurled beside him, and at once shells began to burst dangerously near the group of officers. "Down with that flag!" exclaimed Slatin, the first to realize what was happening. The shells had come from one of the gunboats, the commander of which had taken the sudden appearance of the black flag on Surgham Hill to be a sign that the Khalifa had rushed the height.

The Dervishes were now retreating by the desert towards Omdurman. Broadwood, with his cavalry, the Camel Corps, and the horse battery, was hanging on their rear and making crowds of prisoners. Nearer the city the 21st Lancers were worrying their flank. It was half-past eleven. The battle had lasted more than five hours.

It was now time to reap the fruits of victory. The army was marched to Khor Shambat, just outside the city, where the high Nile had inundated part of the long hollow, and there was a convenient place for the men to rest awhile, refill their water-bottles, and eat. The Khalifa had escaped into the city, where his war-horns and drums were sounding, and he had proclaimed that the place was to be defended to the last. But very few rallied to him, most of the beaten army continuing its flight. An offer of terms which the Sirdar sent him by a native envoy was

rejected, and at two o'clock Maxwell's Brigade was ordered to march into Omdurman.

The Sirdar rode near the head of the column. The captured black standard was carried before him as a visible proof of his victory. Slatin rode beside him, re-entering as a conqueror the city where he had lived as a slave. In the suburbs some of the leading men appeared to offer their submission, and receive from the Sirdar an assurance that all who accepted the new state of things would have nothing to fear from the victors. After this became known the people, who feared a sack and massacre, came in large numbers to welcome the conqueror.

But there was still some resistance. Here and there shots were fired from housetops, and the gate of the inner wall was strongly held. It was blown in and stormed with the bayonet by the 13th Soudanese. Guided by Slatin, at last the Khalifa's house was reached. Outside the gate a handful of horsemen charged the head of the column. The skirmish, brief as it was, enabled the Khalifa to make his escape at the last moment.

As the Sirdar entered the courtyard of the house an unfortunate event occurred. There was scattered firing in the city, and, under the impression that the Khalifa's house was still being held by the enemy, a battery outside the wall began to throw shells into it. The firing was quickly stopped, but not before a bursting shell had killed the Hon. Hubert Howard, one of the correspondents of the *Times*.

The stricken field of Omdurman had broken the

power of Mahdism. It was some months before the last scattered bands of Dervishes were hunted down, and the Khalifa himself was killed in battle fighting against a column commanded by Sir Reginald Wingate, one of Kitchener's most trusted lieutenants and later his successor in the sirdarship.

Thanks to the superior armament of the Anglo-Egyptian army and the attacks made by the Dervishes in dense masses, the losses of the latter were fearfully heavy, those of the former comparatively trifling. By far the most serious loss incurred in the victorious army was that of the 21st Lancers in their charge. In all the other units, British and Egyptian, the proportion of killed to wounded was singularly low, the result probably of the bad powder with which the enemy's cartridges were loaded. The following is a tabular summary of the losses of the Sirdar's army :—

| | Killed. | Wounded. | Totals. |
|---|---|---|---|
| British officers . . . . | 2 | 15 | 17 |
| Correspondents . . . . | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| British rank and file . . . | 25 | 136 | 161 |
| Native officers . . . . | 2 | 8 | 10 |
| Native rank and file . . . | 18 | 273 | 291 |
| | 48 | 434 | 482 |

In the battle about 500,000 bullets and 3,500 shells were fired at the Dervishes. The largest expenditure of cartridges was that of Macdonald's Brigade—160,000 rounds. It is estimated that this

tornado of fire killed 9,700 Dervishes, and at least 10,000 more were wounded, and perhaps a higher number. About 5,000 prisoners were taken on the field.

Omdurman will perhaps rank in history as the last great battle in which a non-European power fought with the weapons and tactics of primitive races against the arms of civilization. Soldiers of the white race can hardly expect to have again the opportunity of winning a decisive victory at so small a cost.

## CHAPTER XII.

### PAARDEBERG.

*February* 18, 1900.

THE South African War, in which the militia of the two Boer republics were opposed to the largest army that Britain ever put in the field, began on October 11, 1899, and was ended by the Convention of Vereeniging on May 31, 1902. Within a few years the bitter feelings aroused by the unequal conflict were happily obliterated by the creation of a United South Africa, in which those who had fought so long under hostile flags joined hands under the banner of the empire, with Louis Botha, who had been the soul of the long resistance on the Boer side, acting as the first Prime Minister of the Union.

We have here to deal only with certain military aspects of the war, as exemplified in the battle which was its turning-point. In the course of these narratives of typical battles of the recent period of military history we have seen how, at the Alma, infantry, armed with the muzzle-loading rifle and fighting in line, were able to defy and break up with heavy loss massed columns of attack, armed mainly

with the old musket. In the story of Sadowa we saw the breech-loading rifle assert its power over the muzzle-loader. The battles of the French war further enforced the lesson of the terrible power of the new weapon, and the extended firing line became the normal fighting formation of civilized troops. The battles of the American Civil War had proved the worth of improvised fortifications on the battlefield, but it was only after Plevna had shown the difficulty of forcing such defences, held by steady infantry armed with the breech-loader, that the full meaning of this lesson was generally appreciated.

But new inventions further increased the effect of the infantry weapon. Various devices were adopted for enabling the soldier to reload rapidly from a magazine attached to the rifle, or a clip holding several cartridges. The bore of the barrel was reduced, so as to diminish the air-resistance to the bullet's flight; and chemical research supplied explosives that not only gave greater driving power, but also produced no cloud of smoke in front of and around the firing line. Infantry armed with the new rifles could thus fire rapidly, with their targets clearly in sight, and send out a shower of bullets whose high velocity gave them a flat line of flight, sweeping the ground for 500 or 600 yards. They could make good shooting up to 1,000 yards, and against closed bodies of troops or other large targets the rifle could now do damage up to a mile and a half.

There were corresponding improvements in artillery,

but it was the coming of the new magazine small-bore and long-range rifles, using smokeless powder, that set the military experts of the world investigating the effect of such weapons on the tactics of the battlefield, and the South African War afforded the first practical test, on a scale large, of the new theories.

In England, on the eve of the war, there was a complete misconception of the peculiar conditions of the coming conflict, and the advantages of the new weapons for the defence were greatly underrated. It was expected that the war would be no very serious business, and it was decided that only a single army corps should be sent to South Africa. On the day when Sir Redvers Buller was embarking at Southampton to take command of the army at the front, an old friend of his, the late Charles Williams, came to see him off. Williams, after having acted as a war correspondent in many campaigns, was then in broken health. "I am sorry you cannot come with me," said the general, as he bade him good-bye. "But you are not missing much. This little war will be all over by Christmas!"

But by Christmas Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking were besieged by the Boers. They had established their commandos in the north of Cape Colony. Besides winning minor successes, they had defeated in one week Gatacre at Stormberg, Methuen at Magersfontein, and Buller himself at Colenso. The whole British plan of campaign had gone to pieces. Reinforcements were being hurried to South Africa from all parts of the empire,

Lord Roberts was on his way to the Cape to save the situation, and Lord Kitchener had been called from the Nile to assist him in solving the difficult problem of breaking this unexpectedly formidable resistance of an army of farmers.

Such was the fighting power that the Boers had shown that at the time their numbers were greatly overestimated. It was long before it was realized that Buller had been repulsed from the crossing of the Tugela at Colenso by 5,000 riflemen and a few guns. But the Boers owed their first successes as much to the blunders of their opponents as to their own remarkable aptitude for defensive war. They were largely an army of mounted riflemen. They could thus make long and rapid marches, and concentrate on a threatened point long before it could be reached by the British soldiers, plodding along slowly, with the further encumbrance of a long train of heavy transport wagons. They had up-to-date repeating rifles, and were good shots. They knew how to make the rocky kopje or the hollow of a river-bed into an improvised fortress. The war began in the South African summer, when wide stretches of the rolling expanse of the veldt are almost a desert. The British commanders were at first so short of transport that they could only operate near a railway line, from which they could draw supplies. This enabled the Boer leaders to await their advance in prepared positions across their track. The attempt to rush such positions from the front, over open ground swept by the rapid fire of Mauser rifles, held by

sharpshooters fighting under cover, proved to be a costly or an impossible operation.

It was said at the outset of the war that, though the Boers might make a stand among the mountain passes of northern Natal, they would be helpless against disciplined troops on the open plains of the Free State and the Bechuanaland border. But at the Modder River it was found that the low sweeping showers of bullets could make a hollow in an open plain all but impregnable; and at Magersfontein, instead of occupying the kopjes, the Boers dug their trenches on the level ground in front of them.

Lord Roberts arrived in South Africa when the fortunes of the British arms were at their lowest. There was an appalling record of costly failures; and Kimberley and Ladysmith were closely besieged, and were believed to be near the end of their resources. He completely altered the situation by a new policy. By the beginning of February he had concentrated along the railway on the western border of the Free State an army of four infantry divisions, with a cavalry division under General French. In all, there were about 45,000 men. It was not a large army, but, unlike every British force that had till now been got together in South Africa, *it was mobile*. It was no longer tied to a railway line, for with Kitchener's help Roberts had formed an adequate wagon train for transport and supply. The new field army could go anywhere, and French's division of cavalry, horse artillery, and mounted

riflemen could move as quickly as the Boers themselves.

His plan was to relieve Kimberley, not by a costly frontal attack on the Magersfontein kopjes, where Cronje's burghers were entrenched on the direct line of approach along the railway, but by entering the Free State and sending French to sweep rapidly round, eastward and northward, across the fords of the Riet and Modder Rivers. Methuen's Division would watch Cronje's front, while the rest of the army, following up French, would outflank him. His force would be destroyed, or at least cut off from the Free State. Roberts would then march across the open veldt on Bloemfontein. This movement would, it was expected, help Buller to relieve Ladysmith by making the Free State burghers hurry back from Natal to the defence of their capital.

This was the plan which, though it did not work out quite as smoothly as had been anticipated, not only succeeded, but changed the whole situation in South Africa. Cronje, covering the siege of Kimberley in his entrenchments at Magersfontein, was not alarmed at the first reports that British cavalry had crossed the Free State border and were moving towards the drifts (wagon fords) of the Modder. He said that the British could not send any big force far from the railway. When they advanced to the rescue of the "Diamond City" they would have to march near the line, and he would stop them again in front of the Magersfontein ridge. He would not worry himself about mere cavalry raids. All he did was to send

off parties of his best mounted men, under Commandants Froneman and Christian de Wet, to observe the movements of the cavalry. Some of the foreign officers who were with Cronje warned him that French's advance would be the prelude of a great movement round his flank that would make the Magersfontein position untenable, and they urged him to move before it was too late. He would not listen to their advice. "You can teach me nothing of war," he said to the French Colonel Villebois de Mareuil. "I was winning battles when you were a boy at school."

French had started on his march from the railway on February 11th. On the 12th he crossed the river Riet at De Kiel's Drift. Then riding nearly directly north across the veldt, through a blaze of heat that played sad havoc with his horses, he seized Rondeval and Klip Drifts on the Modder on the evening of the 13th. There was a brief halt to rest horses and men and allow the infantry to close up to the river. As soon as General Kelly-Kenny's Division appeared, French crossed by Rondeval Drift. A few miles north he found Froneman's burghers extended in a long, thin firing line on a semicircle of hills across his path. He formed a column of brigades, and swept through them in a splendid charge, with a loss of less than a score of men. The way to Kimberley was now open. On the alarm of his approach the besiegers had broken up, and were retiring northwards and eastwards. On the evening of February 15th French rode into the city. Next morning he went

out to the northwards to try to capture the siege artillery of the Boers, but they got their guns away safely.

On the afternoon of the 15th Cronje had an anxious time in his laager near the Magersfontein Kopje. The stubborn old burgher chief had at last woke up to the fact that this was no mere cavalry raid into the Free State, but that a great army had crossed its border. Froneman rode in and told of the long array of squadrons and horse batteries that had swept like a hurricane through his broken line, and dashed northwards to fall upon the besiegers of Kimberley. Then in his own front Methuen's guns began a fierce bombardment of the Magersfontein lines—the usual prelude of an attack. Finally, there was news that showed that it was not only in his front and away to the eastward at Klip Drift that his enemies were in force; for a British column had stormed Jacobsdal, which had been for months his depot of supplies. Some hundreds of the Transvaal men, without consulting him or waiting for orders, saddled up and rode away to cross the Vaal at Barkly West, and so rejoin the besiegers of Kimberley in their retreat. Clearly the end had come. To remain longer at Magersfontein would be to be hopelessly surrounded there.

One of the foreign officers who were with him says that for some time Cronje was in a state bordering on collapse. He sat in his tent in moody silence, with his brave wife, who tried to comfort and encourage him. A more energetic and resourceful soldier

would have realized that Roberts was taking great risks, and would have collected all his best men for a wide sweeping move against the railway. But at this stage of the war even the younger Boer leaders were only just beginning to find out the value of aggressive tactics. This very evening De Wet, who had ridden away to the southwards, was nearly wrecking Roberts's plan by capturing the great supply convoy at Waterval Drift on the Riet, but even he did not understand how to follow up and reap the full fruits of his success. And Cronje, when he began to form a plan, thought only of escaping. His best line of retreat would have been that which some of his men had already taken—across the Vaal, north-west of Kimberley. But what Froneman had told him of French's army of horsemen made him afraid to take that line, and he decided to try to reach Bloemfontein by a march along the Modder. He would have to pass across the front of the British outposts at Klip Drift and be well on his way eastward before French could be recalled from Kimberley. To do this he would have to make a forced march during the night.

Late in the afternoon he sent orders to the burghers to evacuate their trenches and laagers as silently as possible as soon as it was dark that evening, and assemble at the head laager behind the Magersfontein ridge. It was near midnight when all were mustered and ready to march.

He had some 5,000 men with him, of whom about one-third were on foot. There were large numbers

of women and many children. These would travel in the wagons, of which there were several hundred. For want of sufficient oxen for the teams he had to abandon 80 wagons before he started. It was a fine, bright moonlight night, and the long column of horsemen and wagons trailed out along the veldt, moving in no set order, but with mounted scouts guarding its front and flanks. It is strange that no effort had been made to keep a watch on Cronje. French could at least have spared a squadron to move towards Magersfontein as he dashed for Kimberley. Patrols could have been sent along the Riet and Modder from Jacobsdal and Klip Drift, and Methuen might have kept a closer watch on the position in his front. None of these precautions were taken. The result was that, all unknown to the British, who lay north, south, and east of him, Cronje's huge column moved safely across the veldt through the moonlit night. Had he chosen to abandon a few more of his cumbrous wagons, had he succeeded in marching just a mile or two more before the sun rose, he would have been out of sight behind the kopjes north-east of Klip Drift by daylight on the 16th, and would have been safe at Bloemfontein before Roberts had any explanation of his mysterious disappearance.

As it was, he very nearly got away unseen. At 6 a.m. Kitchener was with Kelly-Kenny on a kopje on the south bank of the Modder looking down on Klip Drift. A brigade of mounted infantry had crossed the river *en route* for Kimberley. Their

advanced guard was moving up the hollow of the hills, where French had charged the day before, when over the ridges to their right they saw a great dust-cloud rising—the sure sign of a large column on the move. And across their front came an ox-wagon, a straggler from Cronje's convoy. The wagon was promptly captured, and its occupants admitted that they had marched all night with Cronje, who was east of the kopjes with a large convoy.

Boer scouts, who were still on the hilltops, saw the wagon taken. The mounted infantry halted, and signals were being exchanged with the British outposts at the drift. Kitchener had sent an immediate order, "Go for the convoy;" but the mounted infantry, a newly-formed force, many of whose units were not yet quite at home in the saddle, wasted some time before riding for the ridge on their right, and by the time they were on the move it had been strongly reoccupied by Cronje's rearguard, under Commandant Roos, to whose help the artillery commander, Albrecht, sent back a field-gun and a pom-pom. The mounted infantry rode for the end of the ridge nearest the river; but the Boer shells and rifles drove them back, and they blundered into a stretch of bog by the Modder, where for a while all was hopeless confusion. Kitchener and Kelly-Kenny then brought an infantry brigade and some batteries into action; but Roos held on to his position for more than three hours, and only abandoned it when Cronje had marched another five miles, passed the kopjes north of Dreiput Drift, and formed up

another rearguard upon them. Roos galloped back to the Dreiput kopjes and fought another successful rearguard action there. He was still holding his ground when the sun set and darkness stopped the attack.

After dark Cronje marched again. He now felt quite safe; and safe enough he would have been if he had marched all night. But many of his teams were showing signs of fatigue, and instead of lightening his convoy by abandoning some of the wagons, he halted for nearly four hours after midnight to rest the oxen. Before sunrise he was again moving slowly eastward. At nine he was passing Paardeberg Hill. A little before eleven he halted on the north side of Vendutie Drift, and prepared to cross, the convoy meanwhile forming up in a laager of many lines, while horses and oxen rested and grazed on the patches of veldt grass, and the women began to cook a meal for the men.

Cronje now felt he had succeeded. It would take some hours to pass the heavy wagons down the slope of the drift into the deep hollow of the Modder and up the opposite bank. Then he would be on the fair way to Bloemfontein, having shaken off all pursuit. He had hopes of immediate reinforcement. Commandant Ferreira, with 1,500 or more of the besiegers of Kimberley, had ridden eastwards, and it was thought he might be somewhere near the drift. A signalling party with a heliograph was sent out to the high ground north of Kameelfontein Farm to try to get into touch with him.

There were as yet no signs of the pursuit from the west. Cronje flattered himself that he had shaken it off. But now there came a surprise for him. Into the laager crashed a bursting shell, and then another and another. A battery had suddenly come into action against the great mass of wagons and oxen, men and horses. And the hostile guns were where no one expected them; not to the west, but northward between Kameelfontein and the wagon laager. Formed bodies of mounted men were moving near the guns. French had suddenly come on the scene. It was one of his two horse artillery batteries that had opened on the laager, where for the moment there was something like a panic, horses and oxen breaking away on the veldt, and men running to the shelter of the deeply-hollowed river-bed.

On the 16th, when Roberts heard that Cronje had marched in the night past the Klip Drift outposts, he telegraphed to Methuen at Modder Bridge camp to ascertain whether the Magersfontein lines were really abandoned by the enemy. It was not till half-past eleven that Methuen was able to verify this. Meanwhile information sent by Kitchener had satisfied Roberts that Cronje, with a large force, was trying to escape eastward. He ordered Colvile's Division, which included the Highland Brigade, to reinforce Kelly-Kenny, and telegraphed to the latter that he was to take any directions given by Kitchener as coming from himself. He also tried to telegraph to French at Kimberley to make a forced march and head off Cronje. But the message did not get

through. The field telegraph cable that had been laid down as the cavalry advanced had been interrupted.* When French returned to Kimberley in the afternoon from his unsuccessful pursuit of the Boers, there were rumours in the town that Cronje was retiring along the Modder, but no attempt was made to verify the report. French went early to bed, after telling his officers that the brigade would have a rest next day. Before midnight he was roused, for a message from Roberts had been signalled on by flashlight from Methuen at Modder camp, and a dispatch rider had come in from Klip Drift with a letter from Kitchener. These messages told of Cronje's escape, and directed French to march at once and head him off east of Paardeberg.

The cavalry division was in no condition for another forced march. So many horses had broken down under the trying work of the last few days that only 1,200 men would be available at the outset. By 3 a.m. French rode off with Broadwood's Brigade and two batteries. To reach the point named in his orders, the Koodoosrand Drift east of Vendutie Drift, he had nearly 30 miles to go with tired horses and men.

He reached the high ground north of Vendutie Drift soon after Cronje laagered his convoy. Albrecht brought three guns into action against the horse artillery. Along the Koodoosrand kopjes

* According to one account, it had been burnt through by a fire in the veldt grass ; according to another, it was cut by Cronje's men during the night march.

dismounted troopers skirmished with the Boer riflemen. French was short-handed, and could only hold on to his position till further units of his division joined him. If the Boers had been more aggressive, he might have paid dearly for his daring dash upon their line of retreat; for Ferreira, with his 1,500, was only a few miles away, and had actually come in touch with the brigade on the march. But when he saw the cavalry he had lost heart and drawn off again to the northward. Had he come on in earnest when he heard the cannon near Paardeberg, French's tired handful of lancers and hussars might have been caught between hammer and anvil.

Round the laager and along the river banks the Boers were digging entrenchments. There was not very much water in the Modder, and men and animals and some of the wagons found shelter on the dry strips of river margin under its high banks. In the afternoon the mounted infantry began to arrive from the westward, and skirmished with a Boer rearguard near Paardeberg Hill. Kelly-Kenny's Division, followed later by Colvile's, halted after dark on the south bank of the Modder, near Paardeberg Drift. Kitchener was with the vanguard, eager for action. But it was too late, and the men were too tired, for a serious attack to be made before next day. Kitchener lay down and slept on the ground near the outpost line. If the Boers did not succeed in slipping away in the night, he meant to storm the laager in the morning.

Cronje held a council of war in the evening. Most

of his officers urged him to cross the drift under cover of the darkness and march away, even if some of the convoy had to be left behind. A messenger came in from Ferreira promising co-operation, and suggesting that he should break out to the northwards. But Cronje stubbornly rejected all advice. He would stay and fight, and make the river-bed a fortress; and the British, he predicted, would first be unable to rush it, and then would find that they could not keep an army round him, far from the railway, and with the Boer commandos on the veldt worrying their convoys.

Long before daybreak Kitchener was up and arranging for the projected attack. At 3 a.m. he told Colonel Hannay, commanding the brigade of mounted infantry, to move up to the drifts east of the laager, seize them, send some of his men across, and be ready to attack from that side. As the sun rose and showed the Boers still halted by the river, Kitchener met Kelly-Kenny and outlined to him his plan for storming the laager and the entrenchments along the hollow of the Modder.

The position was briefly this. Cronje's exact force was not known. He had some thousands of fighting men, with a very few guns and an enormous convoy. The convoy lay huddled in a great mass in the sloping depression of the veldt north of Vendutie Drift. The deep trough of the river-bed, with the dense bush that bordered much of its course, was held by the Boer riflemen for about a couple of miles along the winding course of the Modder,

both above and below the laager; and they had dug trenches and rifle-pits in the banks, and sent parties to hold the drifts eastward as far as Koodoosrand. They were thus holding a long front, in which there must be a good deal of ground weakly garrisoned. North of the river was a semicircle of hills, nine miles from point to point. French had his guns on the slopes of this amphitheatre, and blockaded the river fortress on this side. On the south side the slope of the ground from the river was broken by a series of kopjes, whose lower spurs offered good positions for guns to combine with those on the north side in bombarding the laager and the river entrenchments. For the attack there were some 15,000 men available. While the artillery was at work, the troops would be pushed forward along the river-side, both from east and west, and the laager would be rushed by a combined attack from both sides.*

* The forces available on the morning of the 18th were :—

NORTH BANK OF THE MODDER.—General French.

*Broadwood's Cavalry Brigade* and 12 guns R.H.A. (Gordon's Brigade and two more batteries expected from Kimberley during the day).

SOUTH BANK OF THE MODDER.—General Lord Kitchener.

(*a*) Colonel Hannay's *Mounted Infantry Brigade*.—2nd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th battalions Mounted Infantry and the New South Wales Mounted Infantry and Kitchener's Horse (this last a South African corps).

(*b*) *The Sixth Infantry Division*.—General Kelly-Kenny.

*13th Brigade* (Knox).—2nd E. Kent, 2nd Gloucester, 1st West Riding, 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

*18th Brigade* (Stephenson).—1st Yorks, 1st Essex, 1st Welsh.

Kelly-Kenny was opposed to the plan, and gave it as his opinion that an assault would be premature, and probably unnecessary. Every hour was bringing reinforcements, and Cronje could be effectually dealt with by investing and bombarding the laager. If he tried to break out he would be easily driven back, and his improvised fortress would be a trap for him.

But Kitchener's mind was already made up. It would be better to finish the business at one stroke. Kelly-Kenny still held to his own opinion that the slow and sure method was the better one; but the chief of the staff could speak with the authority of Lord Roberts, and as he had begun to issue his orders for the attack, it was no use arguing the matter further. So that day saw the hard fight that is known as the battle of Paardeberg, the most costly day's work of the war, but at the same time its turning-point; at first sight a failure, but really the beginning of decisive success.

It was Kitchener's first battle in South Africa.

*Artillery.*—76th, 81st, and 82nd batteries R.F.A.; two naval 12-pounders.

(*c*) *The Ninth Infantry Division.*—General Colvile.

*3rd* (*Highland*) *Brigade* (Macdonald).—2nd Black Watch, 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

*19th Brigade* (Smith-Dorrien).—1st Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Duke of Cornwall's L.I., 2nd Shropshire, Royal Canadian Regiment.

*Artillery.*—83rd, 84th, and 85th R.F.A.; 65th R.F.A. (Howitzers); two naval 4.7 guns; two naval 12-pounders.

He fought it under endless difficulties. It was an improvised attack, carried through without the help of a properly organized staff, and with a divided command. French's co-operation was all-important; but until after half-past seven it was not possible to signal to him even the briefest message, for the sky was packed with rain-clouds, and (an unusual experience at that season in South Africa) there was not one ray of sunlight with which to set the heliographs flashing their dots and dashes from hill to hill across the river. Battalions and batteries had to be moved out in the twilight over unfamiliar ground from the points where they had happened to halt the night before.

Hannay's mounted infantry were the first to move. Leaving the 2nd and 7th M.I. near Paardeberg Drift, he marched eastward with the rest between the kopjes and the river. The 2nd M.I. sent a company across the river at Paardeberg Drift to reconnoitre the farther bank, while the 7th began to explore the broken ground and bush above the drift on the south bank. The Boers were on the alert, and both parties were fired on wherever they approached the riverside. Those who had crossed found that at the sharp bend of the Modder above Paardeberg Drift a "donga," or dry hollow, running up towards Gun Hill was strongly held by the enemy.

While this skirmishing was in progress, there was another fight just south of the drift opposite the laager, where one of Hannay's detachments of mounted infantry—"Kitchener's Horse"—going too far to

the left, came under fire from a Boer trench at a range of only 400 yards. Some of them turned and rode away towards the kopjes, others dismounted and replied. They found themselves under such a rapid and well-aimed fire that advance and retreat were alike out of the question. They lay flat, and sent back a few random shots, while the bullets of unseen enemies whistled closely over them from the belt of bush along the riverside.

At 6 a.m. the 6th Division (Kelly-Kenny) began to form for the attack. Kitchener sent off Brigadier-General Stephenson with the Welsh and Essex Regiments to support Hannay in his move on the upper drifts. The rest of Stephenson's Brigade and the whole of Knox's were to form the main attack, advancing against the Boer trenches along the south bank below the laager. Colvile had ridden up to Signal Hill, and the leading brigade of his division —Macdonald's Highlanders—was coming up between the hill and the river.

Two batteries had been placed in position on a knoll east of Signal Hill. Shortly before seven Kitchener ordered them to open on the laager and the Boer position in the river-bed near it. French's guns quickly joined in from the northern slopes. Other batteries were brought up, and through the long day, whatever was the fate of the battle, the converging shell fire poured into the Boer camp. Captain Boyle, one of French's staff, noted in his diary his impression of the bombardment. "All the day," he writes, "without intermission till 7

p.m., the guns threw shrapnel and lyddite into the laager and river-bed. Wagon after wagon of ammunition exploded like a terrific fusillade for over an hour, and meanwhile the infantry began their advance. It seemed as if no living man could ever come out of that laager. Shell after shell, the livelong day, dropped into their very centre; yet no surrender, no white flag was shown."

When Kitchener saw the Boer wagons taking fire and the ammunition exploding, Albrecht's guns silenced, and the infantry lines working steadily forward to the river bank, he took a sanguine view of the prospect. Turning to a group of officers he said cheerfully, "It is now seven; we shall be in the laager by half-past ten. I shall then load up French and send him on to Bloemfontein at once." Perhaps he was thinking of another "laager" Mahmoud's zareba on the Atbara—which he had stormed with a rush of infantry after a brief bombardment. But here the attack, which at first had gone rapidly forward towards the winding belt of green scrub that marked the river line, began to move more slowly, and came to a standstill. A point had been reached beyond which progress was more difficult. About 300 yards from the south bank of the river there was a low ridge of rocks and boulders which afforded some cover. Here the advancing infantry gathered in a strong firing line; but the open ground beyond was swept with a deadly hail of bullets from the enemy's trenches, and for some time the forward move was stopped.

Colvile had as yet received no orders, but on his own initiative he was preparing to send his division across Paardeberg Drift, to attack the laager by a move up the north bank. But on a request from Kitchener to support the left of Knox's attack, he sent Macdonald's Highland Brigade up the south bank from near the drift. At the storming of the Dervish zareba on the Atbara, where the enemy's fire was contemptible, Macdonald had successfully taken his Soudanese Brigade into action shoulder to shoulder. But at Magersfontein the Highland Brigade had attacked in the same close formation, and had been hurled back with heavy loss by a burst of Mauser fire. So now the three battalions were formed in three long parallel lines in single file, with four paces between each man and his immediate follower. They moved up the river bank in this thin formation till, as they came under fire, they faced towards the river, and the advance became an extended firing line, with two other extended lines following it up. Two and a half brigades were now in action against the Boers along the river west of the laager. It is not likely that there were more than 1,200 to 1,500 men opposed to them in this part of the position, but the repeating rifle had increased at least fourfold the resisting power of good shots fighting under cover and well supplied with cartridges.

The sun now broke through the gray clouds, and for a while the heliographs began to flicker out their messages. From the north side French reported

that parties of Boers were coming up from the eastward—a sign of an attempt to relieve the beleaguered position. Kitchener signalled back an order for the cavalry to keep off these intruders. On the south bank the preparations for attacking the laager from the eastward were progressing. Hannay's mounted infantry had seized the hill that was afterwards known as Kitchener's Kopje, making prisoners of a small party of Boers who were found there. He had pushed on to the crossings at Vanderberg's and Banks Drifts, beating off the Boers who were watching them, sent some of his men across, and at Banks Drift got into touch with some of French's men, a squadron of the 12th Lancers.

Dismounted troopers were skirmishing with parties of Boers who had appeared on the Koodoosrand heights. These were Ferreira's men. Some of them crossed by the neighbouring drift, reached the kopjes on the south bank, and engaged the nearest of Hannay's mounted infantry. General Stephenson had now arrived to support him with the Welsh and Essex Regiments. Sending some of his companies to help in driving back the Boers, who had crossed the river, Stephenson deployed the rest, and opened fire on the laager from the south-east. A battery was sent to him, and the guns began also to fire on the laager. They had not been long in action when suddenly shells burst among them, coming not from the laager in their front, but from the hills in their rear, east of Ostfontein Farm, and four companies of the Welsh Regiment that were

moving up between these hills and the Modder came under a heavy rifle fire from the same direction.

This unexpected diversion was the work of Commandant Steyn, a relative of the Free State president. He had been hurried up from Natal with two guns and some hundreds of burghers when the news came that Roberts had invaded the Free State, and he had pushed on to the help of Cronje. The attention of the attack was so riveted on the laager and the fighting along the river that Steyn's artillery fire from the Ostfontein kopjes gave the first news of his arrival. Now the guns of the battery that had been firing on the laager were swung round to silence the intruders. The Welsh and the Essex men, and as many of the mounted infantry as were anywhere near, were also turned to repelling the newcomers, and for a while no more was thought of the projected attack on the laager from the eastward.

On the western side of the battlefield and on the south bank there were moments when it seemed that, despite the steady stream of lead that came sweeping the ground from the river-side trenches, the attack would succeed. Little groups of men worked their way forward by lines of boulders or along the shallow dry watercourses hollowed out during the rains. Colonel Bowles and Brigadier-General Knox were wounded, but the fight was now in the hands of company leaders and sergeants commanding sections. In modern war, once an attack, has gained a certain amount of ground and come to a stop, the only way to carry it forward as a whole is to push

in a fairly strong body of fresh men, whose onward dash will carry the rest forward with them. But the 6th Division had now exhausted its reserves, and there was no means of giving this new impulse to the advance. Some of the Yorkshire men, however, did actually reach the river bank. The enemy's fire had slackened in their immediate front, and they suddenly dashed forward with fixed bayonets. The Boers disappeared into the hollow of the river-bed, and the Yorkshires reached the bank, and even made an attempt to struggle through the Modder and attack the enemy on the north side. One brave fellow, Sergeant Cook, got across, but was shot down as he landed. It was a moment when, if there had been a reserve to throw into the fight, the whole river bank might have been won. As it was, the Yorkshires who had gone forward could only take cover and hold on in the bush of the river margin.

Away to their left three companies of the Highland Brigade crossed by the shallows near Paardeberg Drift. Keeping to the broken ground near the north bank, they began to work their way towards the laager, till, about 300 yards from the large gully that ran north from the bend below Gun Hill, they were stopped by a cross-fire from the Boers in the gully and those entrenched in the river banks. The rest of the Highland Brigade were at a standstill, lying down under fire. Macdonald was hit, and had to hand over the command to one of his colonels.

It was now long after ten o'clock, and the laager, though heavily bombarded, was as safe as ever from

direct attack. Kitchener came back to Signal Hill, where for the first time that day he met Colvile. Of the 9th Division only the Highland Brigade was as yet in action, so Colvile had still in hand Smith-Dorrien's Brigade (Gordon Highlanders, Canadians, Cornwalls, and Shropshires). He had originally intended to send all his division to the north side of the Modder, and Kitchener now agreed that Smith-Dorrien's four battalions and some guns should be sent across Paardeberg Drift. A battery followed, and was posted near Gun Hill. To its right the Shropshires and Cornwalls formed to attack the gully and the river trenches near it. The Canadians came next in the line, and then north of Gun Hill the Gordons extended a long firing line, with their extreme left in touch with French.

Kitchener had now built up the scheme of the western attack so that on both sides of the river a converging fire was being directed against the enemy's positions. But turning to the scene of what was intended to be a simultaneous attack from the eastward, he saw that there all his arrangements had gone to pieces, for most of the troops he had sent up the river were still skirmishing with the Boers who had appeared on the Ostfontein heights. Steyn's two guns had been silenced, and Stephenson's two battalions were winning their way up the kopjes. But this meant a complete abeyance of the real business of the day. Kitchener heliographed to French, asking him if he could not send some of his cavalry across the river to keep off the intrusive out-

side Boers; but French had now nothing to spare, for Ferreira's men had been showing themselves in increasing numbers on his left along the Koodoosrand Hills, and he could just find enough men to check them, for Gordon's cavalry brigade had not yet arrived. Gordon was on his way from Kimberley, but with horses so broken down that he had to march his regiments at the walk.

Kitchener now rode over to the scene of the fighting on the right. The fire of the Boers from the Ostfontein kopjes had almost ceased, and it looked as if they were beaten off. He saw General Stephenson and Colonel Hannay, and told them to disregard everything but the attack on the laager. Hannay's mounted infantry were to cross the Modder and press on by the right bank, while Stephenson's two battalions attacked along the south side of the river. Hannay, leaving a few men to watch the kopjes, collected all the rest of his mounted infantry and, crossing the nearest drift, pushed up to within 700 yards of the laager. There he was stopped by an increasingly heavy fire from the trenches on the veldt. Stephenson, on the other bank, did not get so far. He found it impossible to advance beyond the shelter of a dry watercourse about 1,000 yards from the laager.

It was now near three o'clock. Kitchener still believed that if a combined rush upon the Boer position could be made from all sides at once it would be taken. He sent messages to Colvile and Kelly-Kenny, urging them to push on; and he himself

rode over again to Stephenson, told him to withdraw as many of the Welsh and Essex men as possible from their advanced position, take them across Vanderberg's Drift, and support Hannay's attack. While the infantry were crossing, a messenger arrived from Hannay with a report that he found it absolutely impossible to get any further forward. Kitchener sent the messenger back to Hannay with this written order :—

"The time has now come for a final effort. All troops have been warned that the laager must be rushed at all costs. Try and carry Stephenson's Brigade on with you. But if they cannot go, the mounted infantry should do it. Gallop up, if necessary, and fire into the laager."

It would seem that when he wrote the note the chief of the staff imagined that the reference to Stephenson would be a sufficient indication to Hannay that he was to act with the two infantry battalions that were then crossing the drift. Hannay, unfortunately, took the message to be an order for immediate action ; and without even taking any steps to discover where Stephenson was and what he was doing, and without waiting to collect all the men of his own force who had crossed the river, he got a small party together—some fifty or sixty—ordered them to mount, and putting himself at their head, galloped for the laager. As he dashed through his advanced firing line he shouted to the men to come on with him. A good many ran forward on foot, and as the little party on horseback was now drawing all the fire of the trenches in front, they got to a point about 300 yards from the

laager. There they had to stop and throw themselves down, for Hannay's wild charge had ended in failure. Men and horses dropped as he rode on amid a storm of bullets. He was almost alone when he leaped his horse over the Boer trench and fell riddled with Mauser balls fired from rifles that nearly touched him. It was a mad action, but in its very failure it showed that the attack which Kitchener had in mind might have succeeded; for it would have been a very different business if Hannay with all his mounted infantry had ridden up to close quarters, bringing on behind him not a handful of men, but Stephenson's two battalions, ready to dash in with the bayonet.

As it was, the Welsh and Essex Regiments only came into action after Hannay had ridden to his death. They reinforced the firing lines of the mounted infantry, occupied some dongas running down to the river a few hundred yards from the laager, and got no farther. Stephenson later on brought a party of the Royal Engineers across the river, marked out a line of shelter trenches about 1,500 yards from the laager, and drew his men back to this position.

The attack on the west side also failed to get in, but here also there was no organized effort to carry out Kitchener's instructions. The strange thing is that no orders or information as to what was intended reached the brigadier Smith-Dorrien, who ought to have been the organizer of the attempt against the west front of the Boer laager. At a quarter-past five he was surprised at seeing the right of his line

suddenly charge forward, gain a few hundred yards of ground, and then come to as sudden a halt, some of the men throwing themselves down, a few running back. It was all over before he could do anything to control or support the movement. Colonel Aldworth of the Cornwalls had given the order for the forward rush, apparently under the impression that his brigadier and the other battalion commanders of the brigade had received the same order that had reached him. With the Cornwalls some of the Highlanders and of Colonel Otter's Canadians dashed to the front, the French Canadians shouting, "*Vive la Reine!*" Men and officers fell fast under the burst of fire that met them as they rose and rushed on. Half the distance to the nearest trench had been covered when Aldworth was hit and dropped. He raised himself on his left elbow, and pointing forward with his sword called out, "Come on, Cornwalls!" and then sank down and expired. The charge did not go many steps further. The men lay down and began to fire. Here, as elsewhere, partial unsupported assaults ended in defeat.

While the attacks on the laager were thus giving place to mere efforts to hold the ground that had been gained till nightfall, two new bodies of troops reached the field. Gordon's cavalry brigade arrived on French's right, and on its appearance Ferreira's burghers withdrew from the Koodoosrand Hills. The other arrival was De Wet's commando. Late on the evening of the 16th he had news that Cronje was trying to reach Bloemfontein, and he marched

northwards across the veldt to join him. On the afternoon of the 18th he heard the roar of guns from Paardeberg, and "marched for the cannon." With a quick tactical instinct he made for the hills on the track that leads from the drifts of the battlefield south-east towards Bloemfontein, picked up some of the burghers who had retired from the Ostfontein kopjes, learned from them what the situation was, and then rode hard for Kitchener's Kopje. It was held by only a handful of mounted infantry. Some fifty of them were made prisoners, the rest hustled off the hill. De Wet got up two guns and a pom-pom to the top, opened fire on the rear of the 81st Field Battery, which was in action against the laager from a position just below the kopje. While the guns were limbering up, he made an attempt to capture them with a rush of his men, who fired as they came on. The battery was saved with difficulty.

The seizure of the kopje by a force of unknown strength, and accompanied by artillery, turned attention from the laager to this new danger. Kelly-Kenny hurried up men and guns to bar the way of what seemed a determined effort to break through the British positions and join hands with the beleaguered Boers. The coming of darkness put an end to a confused fight on the ground between Kitchener's Kopje and the Modder.

Both sides were utterly exhausted. Kitchener thought for a while of a night attack on the laager, but had to abandon the idea, for the men were "dead beat." After hard marching and scanty sleep they

had been fighting for twelve hours under a burning sun, many of them without food or water since a hurried meal at sunrise. The first need of all was a few hours of rest. The Boers felt the want as much as their opponents. They had had a terrible experience, fighting for long hours under a rain of bullets and the ceaseless din of the shells, that burst over trenches and laager, sending down showers of shrapnel balls, or shattering wagons and cratering the ground with lyddite explosions. De Wet sent in a message urging Cronje to come out by way of the kopje he had seized; but even if the old burgher leader had consented, his men were too exhausted to march.

Lord Roberts arrived in the early morning of the 19th. At first it was thought Cronje was about to surrender, but the message he sent out had been mistranslated. All he asked for was a truce to bury the dead. Kitchener was for renewing the attack; but Roberts vetoed the proposal. The battle had been a costly day's work. More than 1,200 men had been killed or wounded *—the heaviest loss incurred in a single day during the war. With the field hospitals crowded as they were, he shrank from incurring further loss, and chose the slow but sure plan of closely investing and besieging the laager-fortress. It was no easy matter even to ac-

* The British casualties were :—

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Killed . | Officers 20 | Men 300 | Total 320 | Out of 15,000 present on the field. Equal a loss of about 8 per cent. |
| Wounded | Officers 52 | Men 890 | Total 942 | |
| Totals . . | 72 | 1,190 | 1,262 | |

complish this. Ferreira, Steyn, and De Wet had to be driven off and held at bay, and the dogged resistance of the Boers worn down; and the besieging army had to be kept on short rations, for it was a serious business to bring the supply convoys across the veldt.

Cronje did not surrender till February 27. By that time the British had pushed up the river-bed close to the laager by sap and trench, and were ready to make a final assault, which he could not hope to resist. The victory was all the more welcome because it came on the anniversary of Majuba. For the first time in the weary struggle a solid success had been won, and a Boer army not merely driven off but destroyed. The operations against Cronje, by drawing away large bodies of the Free State men from Natal, had also lightened Buller's task in the relief of Ladysmith.

For many weeks after Kitchener's battle of Paardeberg the British public at home knew little of what had happened on February 18th. The casualty lists were issued, and at first suggested one more "disaster;" but the censorship cut down the news sent by the correspondents until it became unintelligible. It is hard to understand such mistaken reticence. It was an injustice to Kitchener and to the army, for it conveyed a false impression. Looking back on the battle of Paardeberg, we can now see that it was a turning-point of the war. Had Cronje been allowed a day's rest on February 18th, the chances are that by nightfall he would have been moving off

to Bloemfontein with De Wet and Steyn. Kitchener had the true idea that he must be held at any cost, and not only held, but grappled with and beaten. With a divided command, and none of the mechanism by which armies are directed with certain effect, he did what he could with the means at hand, and it was not his fault that he failed to inspire more cautious leaders with his own fiery energy. Even so, he held Cronje, and handled him so roughly that the investment became possible. The investment proved to be more costly than a renewed assault would have been. There was, it is true, no long catalogue of killed and wounded in battle, but there were terrible lists of deaths from fever and enteric, contracted in the half-starved camps around the Paardeberg laager.

Kitchener had fought his way close up to Cronje's lines. A fresh division was at hand for a renewed assault on the 19th. But it was vetoed. So Paardeberg, which laid the foundation of success, was counted for a while as a defeat. If we can imagine that on the morrow of Rezonville the old Prussian king had refused to follow up Bazaine, Prince Frederick Charles's fight along the Verdun road on August 16, 1870,* would not to-day be remembered in Germany as the day that prepared the way for the decisive victory of Gravelotte. Kitchener's battle of February 18th was, like Rezonville, a fight that was only a beginning. He was not allowed to follow it up; but even so, it must be counted as the battle

* See chapter vi.

that marked the beginning of a new era in the South African War, the era of energetic effort to compass, not the repulse but the destruction of the enemy—a day, too, on which a soldier of real genius acted on the sound principle that it is the true policy to incur even heavy losses in a few hours' fighting for an adequate object, rather than prolong a conflict for days and weeks by adopting the slower methods that in the end waste life and involve suffering on a far larger scale.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## MUKDEN.

*February 20—March 10, 1905.*

MUKDEN—the final battle of the war between Russia and Japan—was probably the greatest battle in the world's history. More than 600,000 men were engaged in the prolonged struggle, which lasted nearly three weeks, during part of which the opposing lines were extended over a front of more than 80 miles.

It had long been predicted that the evolution of modern war would result in the battles of the future assuming these colossal proportions. There was a time—not so long ago—when wars were fought out by relatively small armies of professional soldiers; but during the last half-century nation after nation has adopted some form of universal service, or some approximation to this system. Thus modern war has tended to become a conflict of nations in arms. The very triumphs of peaceful invention have made it possible to concentrate, feed, direct, and move vast armies. The railway, the telegraph and telephone, the methods of preserving and packing enormous

quantities of provisions—these and other developments of modern industry have all helped to make it possible to maintain and manœuvre hundreds of thousands in the field. And a commander-in-chief of to-day does not fritter away his forces in minor operations, but collects together every available man and gun for a stroke at a decisive point. So in the wars of the future we shall see what was seen at Mukden—the armed manhood of whole nations meeting in prolonged conflict extending over wide tracts of country.

Russia, when she forced Japan into war, made the mistake of completely underrating her opponent. A Russian general assured his countrymen that, even if Japan could obtain command of the sea, she could not by any possibility transport 100,000 men to the mainland of Asia and maintain them there. But Japan, whose armies in the memory of men still living had been armed with bows and arrows and matchlock muskets and spears, and whose navy had been made up of war junks, had, in the lifetime of a generation, learned to use the weapons and the war methods of civilized nations, and had "bettered the instruction." Her navy swept the sea. Her armies poured across it into Korea and Manchuria. In every department on sea and land there was the highest type of efficiency. The Japanese soldier had a traditional contempt for death and danger; but his officers, while ready to risk heavy loss for an adequate object, showed they had learned better than even those of Europe how to minimize the

human cost of war and keep their ranks full. Disease, which in all previous wars had killed more men than fell on the battlefield, was brought down to a minimum in the Japanese armies. In the actual fighting, losses were reduced by skilled entrenching and by an elaborate system of masking the positions of guns and men and hiding the lines on which they moved. Large use was made of night marching in the approach to hostile positions. But when the crisis of a fight came life was freely spent, and the Japanese soldiers showed a reckless courage in coming to close quarters with the bayonet.

A highly-trained staff, educated by German experts, had reduced the direction of the campaign to a fine art. In the great battles the commander-in-chief would establish his headquarters in a temple or a country house, link it with every point of his firing line by telegraph, telephone, and signal stations, and then with his marked maps before him direct the unseen battle like an expert playing a chess game. Army after army was sent to the front till there were more than 500,000 men in the field. The Russians, heavily outnumbered at the outset, had to supply and reinforce the army in the Far East by a single line of railway stretching through some thousand miles of Northern Asia.* It was only by the greatest efforts that they made good the losses of the campaign, and after long months gradually brought up the numbers of Kuropatkin's army in

* From Moscow to Harbin Junction, the Russian base in Northern Manchuria, was a journey of 5,400 miles.

Manchuria to something like equal numbers with the Japanese field forces immediately opposed to him.

The war had begun with a Japanese occupation of Korea and the invasion of Manchuria by the crossing of the Yalu. The fleet, under Togo, had secured the command of the sea, and as soon as the Japanese were established in Southern Manchuria, another army was transported to the Liao-tung peninsula, and Port Arthur was besieged. The armies in Manchuria were strongly reinforced. They fought their way over the mountain passes into the plain of the Liao and the Hun-ho; Niu-chwang was seized to give a nearer base of supply for a further advance; and then the three armies of Kuroki, Nozu, and Oku closed in upon Liao-yang, and after several days of fighting occupied the city on September 3rd, Kuropatkin abandoning his entrenched position and retiring on Mukden.

The Russian general had originally intended to make his next stand 40 miles farther north, at Tieling, where the Liao River, the old "Mandarin road," and the modern railway pass side by side through a wide opening in the hills, the natural gateway between Southern and Northern Manchuria. But he halted about Mukden, because the Japanese pursuit was very slack, and gave him ample breathing time, and because his government insisted on the loss of prestige that would result from the famous city falling into the hands of the enemy without a struggle.

For Mukden is one of the historic cities of the Far East. It has a population of about 300,000, who

live partly in the old walled city, and partly in its extensive suburbs. The walled city is a square enclosure, surrounded by massive ramparts, brick-built, and with fantastically decorated gates. It was the capital of the Manchu dynasty that conquered China in the seventeenth century and now reigns at Pekin. To the north and north-east of the city there are two extensive parks, with marble gateways, numerous pagodas and halls for ceremonial rites, avenues of colossal figures of uncouth animals carved in stone, and grave mounds surrounded by groves of sacred trees. These parks are the burial places of the Manchu dynasty, and in the operations round Mukden both the Russian and the Japanese commanders took the greatest care that no troops should enter the enclosures, and that no injury should be done to their groves and temples. There was a tacit agreement as to this neutralization of the tombs of the emperors and their surroundings, for both the belligerents were anxious to avoid giving offence to the court of Pekin.

East of Mukden extends the central mountain mass of Manchuria. From the valleys of this hill region numerous rivers running from east to west, and turning south-west after passing the railway line, flow down to swell the great stream of the Liao-ho. Mukden stands on the edge of the plain that stretches westward to and beyond the great river—a cultivated tract with many villages and small country towns. By the capture of Liao-yang the Japanese had got possession of the Yen-tai coal mines,

the chief source of fuel supply for working the Manchurian railway. Kuropatkin laid down a light railway to the mines of Fu-shun, east of Mukden, to compensate for this loss, and the Fu-shun line was used for the transport of troops from the centre to the left of the Russian positions during the subsequent fighting.

Kuropatkin began to entrench defensive lines along the Hun-ho and Sha-ho rivers, south of Mukden. The Japanese had pushed forward to the south side of the Sha-ho, and along its southern bank they threw up formidable lines of trenches, redoubts, and batteries. The river is 500 yards wide in the season of rains. Now, at the end of the summer, its bed was a great sandy hollow along which wound the river, reduced to some 60 yards in width, but mostly too deep to ford. It thus formed a huge ditch along the front of the Japanese lines, except for a few miles near Sha-ho-pu, where the Russians held both banks. The Japanese plan was to hold on here until Port Arthur surrendered. Nogi would then bring up the besieging army to the Sha-ho lines; further reinforcements would have arrived from Japan, and the general advance against Mukden would begin.

In October Kuropatkin assumed the offensive, and advanced against the Sha-ho lines. But he was repulsed after several days of hard fighting. The two armies then faced each other on opposite sides of the Sha-ho. Both were receiving reinforcements and working hard at entrenching, and erect-

ing huts for the coming hard weather. There was almost a truce. The men at the outposts exchanged cigarettes and other little comforts, and it was arranged that unarmed parties from both sides should be allowed to come down to the river to draw water without being fired upon. In November the severe winter weather began. By the end of the month hills and plains were covered with snow, and the rivers were freezing.

The informal truce was broken by occasional outbursts of hostilities, but no serious operations were attempted on either side during the earlier part of the winter season. The first week of January 1905 brought the news that Port Arthur had at last surrendered to General Nogi.

During the month of January, while Marshal Oyama, the Japanese generalissimo, and his chief of the staff, Kodama, were already preparing for their great stroke against Mukden, the Russians ventured on two attempts against the Sha-ho positions. The first was indirect—a raid by a division of Cossacks, under General Mitschenko, against the railway in the left rear of the Japanese and their magazines at Niu-chwang. The raid was ill-directed, and was repulsed after very little damage had been done. Then, in the third week of January, General Gripenberg with 70,000 men crossed the three-foot ice on the Hun-ho, and fell upon Oyama's left at Hei-toukai. He was beaten back after a hard-fought battle.

The Japanese knew better than to waste their energies on any partial attacks. They were steadily

accumulating their resources for the decisive effort, and acting all the while under the veil of a strict press censorship, aided by the patriotic reticence of soldiers and people. In letters home from the front places were never named in the dating or the body of the letter, regimental and divisional numbers were omitted, and the Japanese newspapers, when they published photographs taken at the front, gave them the vaguest of descriptive titles.*

There were rumours of a new Japanese army, later on officially known as the "5th Army," under General Kawamura, having landed at the mouth of the Yalu and disappeared into the hills. There were conjectures that this army was destined to march northwards through the coast districts of Manchuria, and combine with the fleet in an attack on Vladivostok. Every one knew that Nogi's army, after reducing Port Arthur, would not be left idle in the Liao-tung peninsula. It must be on its way to the fighting front, but there was the strictest secrecy as to what part of Oyama's lines it was to reinforce.

While the Japanese were steadily accumulating men and guns behind their fortified lines, Kuropatkin could now hope for no further reinforcements for some weeks to come. For January 22nd was the "Red Sunday" of St. Petersburg, when the unarmed crowds, marching on the palace to petition the

* For instance, "The —— engineer company entrenching at a certain place in Manchuria." "Officers of the —— regiment of infantry in winter quarters." "An outpost of the —— cavalry at the front."

Czar for a constitution, had been shot down in hundreds in the streets, and these terrible scenes of repression had been followed by attempts at revolt and general disorganization, not only in European Russia, but in the great centres of population along the Siberian railway.

The Japanese had good reason to act while this period of stress was increasing from day to day the anxieties of the Russian commander. There was another reason for early action. While the hard cold of the winter lasted the rivers could be crossed anywhere on a broad front on the thick ice that covered them, and the plain of the Liao could be traversed by men and guns in any direction. Once the thaw began the rivers would be swollen with floods from the melting snow on the hills and encumbered with drift ice, and the level lands towards the Liao would be for a while an impassable quagmire. So in the middle of February Omaya made the first moves that preluded a general advance northwards.

He had no easy problem to solve. An elaborate system of espionage had given him a complete knowledge of the Russian defence preparations. In his immediate front the enemy held a fortified line some 60 miles long.* The right extended for some miles into the plain beyond the Hun-ho. Thence the line ran eastwards till it reached the north bank of the Sha-ho, where the river bends to the south-west not far from the railway bridge. Then it followed the river, crossing it near Sha-ho-pu, and taking in

* To follow this description, see map, Battle of Mukden.

some miles of the south bank. Recrossing the river, it again followed the north bank into the hill country, and was then carried through the mountains to a little beyond the Wang-fu Pass. Here the continuous line of works ended; but the Kautu Pass, north of the Wang-fu, was also fortified, and there were detached posts with less elaborate defensive works watching the defiles even farther east.

The fortified line was formed of a succession of trenches, redoubts, and earthwork batteries. The works were in places strengthened by a second and even a third line in their rear, and in front there were obstacles formed of wire entanglements, abattis of felled trees, pit-traps, and ground mines.

But this was only the first advanced line of defences barring the approach to Mukden. The place itself had been fortified by a second line closer in. The old Chinese ramparts, with their canopied gateways, bright with painted carvings and towering high above the suburbs, were useless in modern war; but south of the city Kuropatkin had thrown up an inner line of earthworks, extending for some miles along the south side of the Hun-ho, and with its flanks resting on the river. Right and left of it were supplementary lines of entrenchments. One of these ran along the north bank of the river for 20 miles, from the tombs of the emperors to near the town of Fu-shun. The other line, intended to protect Mukden against an attack from the westward, ran south to north, from the bank of the Hun-ho River to a point about six miles west of the city,

where the line turned and was carried back for four miles more in a direction a little north of east. This western line was, however, in a very incomplete state.

To hold these extensive works Kuropatkin had gathered an army of 310,000 men and 1,200 field guns, besides between 200 and 300 heavy guns, and 88 machine guns mounted in the earthworks. Sixteen army corps had been grouped in three subordinate armies. On the left, in the hills, was the 1st Army, under General Linievitch; in the centre, south of Mukden and along the Sha-ho, was the 3rd Army, under General Bilderling; on the right, in the plain west of the railway and extending beyond the Hun-ho, was the 2nd Army, commanded by General Kaulbars.

There is some doubt about the precise numbers of the Japanese armies which Oyama had concentrated for the advance. The Russians thought that they were seriously outnumbered, but the balance of evidence goes to show that the Japanese fighting strength was also about 300,000 men. There were 263 battalions of infantry, 66 squadrons of cavalry, and 150 batteries with 900 field guns, besides 170 heavy guns of position (including part of the siege train from Port Arthur) and 200 machine guns. This great mass of men and guns was organized in divisions grouped in five armies, each of the average strength of about 60,000 men. In the front line were the troops that had held the Sha-ho lines since the end of the previous summer; on the right the 1st Army, under Kuroki, faced Linievitch; in the

centre the 4th Army, under Nozu, was opposed to Bilderling; on the left Oku, with the 2nd Army, faced Kaulbars in the plain. Behind Oku's outer flank, unknown to the Russians, Oyama had placed the 3rd Army, under Nogi, the men who had done all the hard fighting before Port Arthur. The distinctive numbers of these armies indicated the order in which they had been sent to the seat of war. Thus Kuroki's men of the 1st Army had been a year in the field, for they were the soldiers who had landed in Korea and won the first battle of the war on the Yalu. Behind the extreme right in the hill country were the newest comers—the 5th Army, under Kawamura. Its ranks were largely filled with reservists lately called from field, workshop, desk, and counter, and young recruits fresh from the depots, and it was therefore stiffened by the addition of a division detached from Nogi's army. Kawamura's army represented Japan's final effort, and when the fighting began the remarkable thing was that his young recruits and the middle-aged reservists showed as much endurance, energy, and dash as Kuroki's war-tried veterans.

To attempt to force the Russian fortified lines by a frontal attack would have been too dangerous and costly an operation. Oyama had to devise a means of turning the enemy out of their lines by pressure from a flank. It was foreseen that the battle would last for many days. But there was a problem of space as well as time. On earlier battlefields a movement of a mile or two would suffice to reinforce one of the wings from the centre. The

Japanese were good marchers. There were days when a column covered 50 miles. And they needed to march well, for in the flanking movements Oyama had projected, this battle on a front of 80 miles would necessitate marches of over 70 miles for some of the columns.

In order to enable the reader more readily to grasp the scale of the operations in a great battle like that of Mukden (and such will be some of the decisive battles of future wars), let us suppose such a fight taking place in the south of England. The defence line would have its left, say, at London, its right on Salisbury Plain. A flank march such as Nogi executed at Mukden would be represented by an army moving out from Southampton and sweeping round through Dorsetshire and the border of Somerset, past Bath, across the north of Wiltshire, and into Berkshire.

Now Oyama had to keep in touch with every point of his enormous front, and to maintain this touch as the divisions made their long marches. This meant the organization of a huge system of field telegraphs and telephones, which had to be extended as more and more ground was won—a system with hundreds of miles of wires and cables, and scores on scores of transmitting and receiving stations, with a headquarters office like the central telegraph office of a large city.

And there was another pressing problem. The attacking army would be something like a moving city of 300,000 men, who would have not only to be

fed from day to day, but kept supplied also with ton loads of ammunition for rifles and artillery. This meant a complex system of ever-moving convoys in the mountains and in the plain.

Finally, enduring as the Japanese soldier is, men could not fight for days on days without rest, so it must be arranged to have reliefs for the fighting line, all the more because night would bring no rest for the army as a whole. In the presence of the deadly fire of the weapons of to-day the hours of darkness are valuable. There will be many night attacks, and still more night marches, or advances to new ground, into which the men will dig themselves so as to have shelter from fire when the day comes. Finally, provision has to be made for the thousands of wounded who will have to be given first aid at the fighting front, and then be transported to the great field hospitals in the rear. These are the complex problems the commander of an army of our day has to face on the eve of one of those colossal battles.

All the elaborate preparations had been completed by the middle of February, and by that time Oyama and his trusty chief of the staff, Kodama—"the Moltke of Japan"—were already making the first moves in the deadly game. Their object was to divert the attention of Kuropatkin from certain points and rivet it upon others. The Russian army was drawing some of its supplies from Harbin by the Manchurian railway. But it had another source of supply. At Sin-min-ting, on the western side of the Liao-ho, and therefore in Chinese territory, there

was the terminal station of the railway line to Northern China and Pekin. By this line Chinese contractors were sending up large quantities of supplies for the Russians, which were then taken across the frozen plain by convoys. In the middle of February Oyama sent more than one column of mounted troops to sweep round the extreme right of Kaulbars's army, and not only threaten the convoy road from Sin-min-ting, but, pushing farther north, cut the Manchurian railway itself behind Mukden. One of these raiding parties, after cutting the railway, came back in triumph with two Russian horse artillery guns, which it had captured in a fight with a Russian column dispatched to cut off its retreat.

To guard his lines of supply, Kuropatkin drew back to the railway and the convoy track the cavalry that had till now been watching the Japanese left in the plain. The raids might have suggested to Kuropatkin that the principal attack of the Japanese would come in the form of an attempt to turn the right of his line. But in the midst of the excitement caused by the cavalry raids on the railway there came news of the sudden activity of the Japanese far away to the Russian left in the mountains. Kawamura had slipped out from behind Kuroki's extreme flank, and on February 20th came in contact with the Russians. Cossack detachments, watching the narrow mountain roads among the precipices and ravines of the Ta-lin Mountains beyond the extreme left of the Russian lines, were driven in by columns of little Japanese infantrymen, that came tramping through

a driving snowstorm, with their batteries of mule guns behind them.

Linievitch hurried out reinforcements from his left. Then as Kuroki's army became active all along his front, he reported to Kuropatkin at Mukden that the enemy were making a determined effort to force and outflank the left of the whole army.

Kuropatkin had for some time been expecting this. He thought that the Japanese, who had already shown themselves experts in hill fighting, were more likely to attack through the mountain country than either to hurl themselves against his fortified centre or risk a pitched battle on the open plain of the Liao. Linievitch's news confirmed him in this view, and for some days he was busy marching eastward into the hills all the troops and guns he thought he could spare from his reserves, and from other parts of his long line. This was just what Oyama wanted.

Kawamura was advancing from the south-east in two long columns, the objectives marked out for which were the towns of Tita and Ma-chun-tun. To reach these points they would have to fight their way through the passes of the Ta-lin Mountains. The heaviest fighting fell to the lot of the left column, which on February 23rd found its way barred by a Russian division holding the fortified pass of Chin-ho-cheng, 22 miles from Ma-chun-tun. All day the Japanese attacked through a blinding snowstorm. The first assaults on the Russian position were beaten back with heavy loss—part of it due to

the explosions of numerous ground mines in front of the trenches. Darkness ended the fighting, and the Russians everywhere held their own. Next day Kawamura had two divisions in action, and after some severe hand-to-hand fighting with the bayonet the Russians were driven from their trenches; but not until the ridges of the hills on their flank had been captured, and further resistance would have endangered their line of retreat. In earlier wars this two days' conflict would have counted as a battle; here it was but an incident in the great struggle between hundreds of thousands.

While Kawamura was thus forcing his way through the snowy mountain passes, Kuroki, with the 1st Army, had come into action on his left, pressing forward against the positions to right and left of the Wang-fu Pass. Here there was the first night fighting of the great battle. These night operations, which played a great part in the conflict, were of two kinds. A firing line of infantry, which had been brought to a standstill during the day, would be relieved at nightfall by fresh battalions. These would move forward some distance; then, after throwing out a line of skirmishers to protect themselves, the men would work till daylight digging a shelter trench and throwing up the earth into a low parapet in front. At dawn they would be ready to open fire from this improvised cover. It was the method of sieges applied to the battlefield.

The other night operations meant close fighting with sword and bayonet. A village, a farmstead, a

knoll in the hills, held by the enemy, would be the object of the attack. Usually volunteers would be called for. There were always more than enough. Often the officers and men would pledge themselves to each other that in case of failure they would not return alive. "If we cannot win," they would say, "we shall all meet to-night in the land of spirits." At first the men of these "forlorn hopes" used to wear white bands on their sleeves to enable them to recognize each other as friends in the mêlée. But this was soon found to be unnecessary. "The Russians are tall, we are short," would be the officer's warning to his men, "so when it comes to the fight in the dark *run any tall man through.*" Then they stole out in silence to the attack. The European soldier goes out to battle meaning to face danger fearlessly, but hoping to escape it. In the Japanese the old semi-barbarian courage survives. He really feels that to die fighting is the best of good fortune. This is the explanation of the reckless fury of the Japanese onset.

Along the centre and left of Oyama's army during these first days there was no forward movement, but along the Sha-ho and out into the plain some of the guns were in action shelling the Russian lines, for it was important to keep Bilderling and Kaulbars under the menace of attack.

Behind Oku's lines Nogi, with the conquerors of Port Arthur, had begun to move westward towards the Hun-ho. His flank march, as yet unsuspected, was to be the great surprise of the battle for Kuro-

patkin, who thought that his other flank in the hills was the real danger-point.

On the last day of February Kawamura's two columns had traversed the Ta-lin Mountains. The right column was before Tita, the left before Ma-chun-tun. Here they found their further advance barred for a week by lines of defensive works strongly held, for by this time Kuropatkin had hurried up a whole army corps from his centre to reinforce these positions on his extreme left.

Kawamura was not able to overcome the stubborn resistance of the Russians until Kuroki had gradually pushed forward on his left, and was able to reinforce and co-operate with him. Kuroki had been provided with heavy guns and howitzers, and it was a surprise to the Russians, holding the fortifications of the Wang-fu and Kau-tu passes, to find that the Japanese had been able to drag this formidable artillery, with ample supplies of its ponderous ammunition, over the rugged, snow-covered mountain roads. After a two days' bombardment with high explosive shells, the Wang-fu Pass was stormed on February 27th. Two days later the Kau-tu was taken after a series of desperate hand-to-hand conflicts, in which the Japanese lost more than 2,000 men.

In the centre, Nozu, on February 27th, brought all his artillery into action against the opposing lines, and his infantry began to work gradually forward with the cannon firing over them. At several points they came into close action with the Russians, but mostly they lay in the snow, scraping up a little

of the frozen surface soil for a shelter, and firing at the nearest Russian trenches. All this activity on Nozu's part was intended merely to keep Bilderling thoroughly occupied. The real work was being done on the right and left.

On this same eventful day—February 27th—Nogi, marching his men of the 4th Army in several parallel columns, began to cross the Hun River on the ice. His movement was screened for a while by Oku engaging Kaulbars and sending out two divisions of the 2nd Army to extend his own line across the Hun-ho and threaten to overlap and turn the Russian flank. Kaulbars met the move by extending and throwing back his own right. On the plain beyond the two armies a screen of Japanese cavalry was thrown out to the north-westward. Behind these Nogi pressed steadily on. His cavalry crossed the frozen Liao-ho, marched up its western bank, drove a brigade of Cossacks before them, and early on March 1st dashed into Sin-min-ting, seized the railway station, and captured enormous quantities of supplies destined for Kuropatkin's army.

By this time Nogi's infantry columns were wheeling to face eastward and march on Mukden; then turning both the outer line of works and the inner line along the Hun-ho, Nogi's right joined hands with Oku's left. In front of the great attack thus developing from the westward, Kaulbars was marching brigades and divisions in hot haste to form a new battle line running north and south on the plain, and was appealing to Kuropatkin for reinforcements.

The battle was now more than half won by the Japanese. The marvellous marching and fighting qualities of their men are evident from the fact that Oyama was thus able to attack an army practically equal in numbers to his own by turning both its flanks, extending his two wings over an enormous crescent-shaped front, pivoting these extensions on his fortified centre, and threatening to crush his enemy between the encircling horns of the crescent. Had the Russians been at all equal to their enemies in initiative, mobility, and energetic determination in the actual conflict, it would have been courting destruction for Oyama to take such risks. For Kuropatkin would have shattered the hostile ring by a concentrated attack from the interior of it as it tried to close upon him.

In the first days of March this closing in made steady progress. Far away to the east, in the mountain country, General Rennenkampf, the officer in command of the troops assembled to oppose Kawamura, made a dogged resistance about Ma-chun-tun and Tita; but Kuroki was forcing back Linievitch's left and driving a wedge in between him and Rennenkampf, and presently was able to threaten the latter on the flank, and directly to reinforce Kawamura. Then at last the Russian resistance broke down: Ma-chun-tun was taken on March 8th, and Tita on the following day.

By this time the Russian defence had everywhere collapsed. The strain under which it gave way was the result of Nogi's pressure from the westward.

His advance, unless held back, would cut the railway, and there was nothing in front of him in the way of prepared defences except the weak and in many places incomplete western works. Kuropatkin steadily reinforced the line which Kaulbars had formed by extending and throwing back his corps to the west of Mukden. This improvised battle line had some 15 miles of front, and all along it Nogi, reinforced by Oku, was attacking by day and by night with furious energy. Every man in that fighting line of Japanese felt that a speedy victory meant the destruction of the Russian army. Kaulbars was struggling to prevent a Far Eastern Sedan. In the towns and villages of the plain there were days and nights of reckless fighting at close quarters. One by one they were stormed, or burned and wrecked by the Japanese artillery. But it was only at the cost of terrible losses that Nogi's men slowly won their way forward. By the end of the first week of March some of his battalions were reduced to the strength of companies.

But to reinforce and sustain for a while the fighting line to the westward, Kuropatkin had been compelled seriously to weaken the rest of his defence. On the 7th Kuroki telegraphed to Nozu, in the centre, to tell him that he felt the Russian resistance slackening in his front, and suggesting to his colleague that if he pressed the attack along the Sha-ho in the centre, he also would probably find that a considerable part of the garrison of the Russian works there had been withdrawn.

Nozu took the hint. His infantry was sent forward against the trenches along the river, and met with only a half-hearted resistance, for the Russians were already actually falling back to the lines of the Hun-ho. Kuropatkin had issued orders for a general retreat on Tie-ling.

The famous fortified lines on which 100,000 men had toiled for months thus fell almost without a struggle, under the indirect pressure exercised by the flank attacks. The eastern attack in the hills had drawn the Russian reserves away to their left, and so facilitated the all-important stroke across the plain of the Liao-ho against their right. When the danger on that side was realized, it could be only met by bringing men up by weary forced marches from all parts of the widely extended positions. These reinforcements arrived by driblets, and were able only to delay the Japanese advance. Kuropatkin could not exert any serious influence on the course of events, for he had frittered away his resources, and had no large body of fresh reserves that could be thrown into the fight to act with a definite purpose, as, for instance, by a well-organized counter-attack on the advancing enemy on a large scale. In those first days of March, up to the moment when he decided to save his army by abandoning Mukden, he was simply stopping the gaps in a long weak line, fighting on ground where he had never anticipated a serious encounter with the enemy.

As Bilderling gave way before Nozu, so to his left Linievitch, after sending off more men than he

could safely spare on the long march to reinforce Kaulbars, found himself so weakened that, even before the general order for the retreat reached him, he was retiring before Kuroki's attacks. Kawamura's left column, with one of Kuroki's divisions, pushed on to the Hun-ho, opposite Fu-shun. The weather had suddenly become milder. The ice on the Hun was breaking up, and it was with great difficulty that the Japanese got their guns over the river. They crossed it on the 9th, and found the enemy abandoning the lines along the north bank. By midnight the walled town of Fu-shun was occupied after a brief rearguard action.

Nogi's advance from the westward, and Nozu's victorious crossing of the Sha-ho, south of Mukden, had all but cut off a considerable mass of Russian troops who had held the fortified lines west of the Sha-ho railway bridge. Here some thousands of Russians were made prisoners. Throughout the 9th and 10th Kuropatkin was fighting no longer for victory, but only to hold back Nogi from the railway and the Tie-ling road long enough to extricate as much of his army as possible from the closing horns of the crescent. He no longer opposed a mere passive resistance to the terrible pressure from the westward; he organized more than one counter-attack, and the Russians fought well enough to gain some little breathing time.

But, all the same, the 10th was the crowning day of victory for Oyama. He need no longer remain in the centre of his web of telegraph wires, receiving reports, marking off positions on his map, sending

out orders. He could now leave it to his subordinate commanders to reap the fruits of the three weeks' struggle for victory. He rode forward early in the day towards Mukden, to see the closing scenes.

Along the Sha-ho, far as the eye could see and beyond the range of sight, extended the fortified lines from which two armies had watched each other for months. They were now deserted. The great siege guns were silent. Along the captured Russian lines there were only the ambulance men and burial parties of impressed Chinese labourers clearing away the wreck of battle. Northwards, Nozu's victorious battalions were pressing on the rear of the retiring Russians, who had abandoned the lines of the Hun-ho, and were only anxious to escape through the suburbs of Mukden. North and west of the city a great battle was raging for miles. The Russians were making their last stand; and in rear of the fighting line trains were moving along the railway, and a wide stream of men, horses, guns, and wagons was pouring steadily northward by and on both sides of the Tie-ling road. The smoke of a score of burning villages darkened the wintry sky, and from the huge piles of stores near the railway station, west of the city, the smoke of another conflagration began to ascend as the Russians fired the magazines they were forced to abandon to the victors. Far away from the hills to the north-east came the dull thunder of another and more distant cannonade. There Kuroki and Kawamura were hustling the retreat of Linievitch's army.

Before midday Nozu, after receiving the surrender of crowds of Russians, had ridden forward to one of the south gates of Mukden and received the surrender of the city from the Chinese civil authorities, to whom he promised the protection of the victors. Everywhere in the city the Red Cross flag was flying. It had become a vast hospital for the Russian wounded.

North of the city thousands more of prisoners were taken. The rear of the beaten army had here become a mere disorganized crowd. The Japanese artillery sent its shells into the huddled mass of men, horses, and wagons, with the result that there were a prompt display of white flags and a speedy surrender. Late in the afternoon Nogi's advance cut in upon the railway at Pu-ho, north of Mukden, and stopped all further traffic along the line. Shortly after this the heads of the Japanese columns were across the road. Till darkness set in there was fierce fighting with the rearguards which covered the retirement of the enemy to the northward.

During the succeeding days the pursuit was so vigorously pushed that Kuropatkin decided to abandon the Tie-ling Pass and to concentrate towards Harbin. A dispatch from St. Petersburg deprived him of his command, and entrusted the future fortunes of the Army of the East to the veteran Linievitch, whose long resistance to the advance of Kawamura and Kuroki had made him for the Russians the popular hero of those disastrous days.

But there were to be no more great battles in Manchuria. The disorganization of Russia at home by

the revolutionary movement, and the complete destruction of the armada sent out from Europe, when it met Togo's fleet in the straits of Tsu-shima, compelled the Czar's Government to ask for peace.

The Russian losses in the three weeks' battle, and especially in its closing stages, were enormous. About noon on March 10th, in the last hours of the fight, Oyama had telegraphed to Tokio: "We have taken an exceedingly large number of prisoners and immense quantities of arms, ammunition, provisions, forage, and war material, but it is as yet impossible to reckon them up." To this day there is no certainty as to what the reckoning really was.

The Russian Government officially admitted a loss of 96,500 in killed, wounded, and missing or prisoners. But the Japanese stated that they had over 40,000 prisoners in their hands, and that they had found 26,500 Russian dead on the vast battlefield. They further estimated the number of wounded left in their hands or sent off northwards at some 90,000. This would make a total Russian loss of nearly 160,000 men, or, say, about half their fighting strength.

The Japanese stated their loss in killed and wounded at 41,222 officers and men. As there was much fierce fighting at close quarters, we may take it that in this total the dead would number some 12,000 to 15,000. Probably the united losses of both sides would not be much less than 40,000 killed and 120,000 wounded—figures so large that one cannot imagine the mass of human misery they sum up.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### LULE BURGAS.

*October* 28–31, 1912.

IN the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78 the decisive episode was the struggle for Plevna.* Having repulsed repeated assaults, Osman Pasha with his starving army tried to fight his way out, but was wounded and compelled to surrender. After this no effective resistance was offered to the Russian advance. The invaders occupied Adrianople, then practically an open place. There was only a handful of troops between them and Constantinople. The fortification of the lines of Chatalja, covering the approach to the city, had barely been begun. There was no hope of saving the capital. Turkey sued for peace, and an armistice was signed at Adrianople on January 31, 1878.

This was followed by the Treaty of San Stefano, which erected Bulgaria into a semi-independent state, after it had been for five centuries a Turkish province. The new Bulgaria was to extend from the Danube to the shores of the Archipelago, leaving

* See chapter viii.

to the Turks a small stretch of territory near Constantinople. But the European Powers protested, and, at the Congress of Berlin, narrower limits were assigned to the new principality, and the district between the northern and southern chains of the Balkans, from the upper basin of the Maritza River to the Black Sea, was formed into a separate province to be known as Eastern Roumelia. It was to remain under the rule of the Sultan, but was to have a Christian governor and a semi-independent administration.

Eastern Roumelia had a population largely of Bulgarian origin and language, and there was also a considerable Bulgarian element in the Turkish provinces south of the Balkans, especially in Macedonia. The politicians of Sofia from the very first hoped, sooner or later, to win dominion over these outlying Bulgarian districts, and regain the frontiers assigned to the principality at San Stefano.

A necessary factor in such a policy was the creation of a powerful army. The Bulgarian army was in its earlier years organized, trained, and commanded in all the higher grades by officers sent from Russia, which looked on the new state almost as an outlying province of the Czar's empire. But in 1885 the principality threw off this Muscovite tutelage, and almost at the same moment a movement, that had been in progress for some time for the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria, came to a head. There was a revolution at Philippopolis, the capital of the province; the Turkish flag was

hauled down; and Prince Alexander of Bulgaria marched his army across the passes, to receive the homage of his new subjects, and prepare to meet an expected armed intervention on the part of the Sultan.

But the Turks accepted the new situation. The danger came from another quarter. The Servians, jealous of Bulgaria's sudden increase of territory, and incited by the ill-will of Russia, were marching on Sofia. By forced marches the Bulgarian army was transferred to the western frontier. Only a few weeks before all the Russian officers had departed, and captains had suddenly been promoted to command regiments, brigades, and divisions. But these young men showed that there were born soldiers among them. The Servians were totally defeated in the three days' battle of Slivnitza (November 17–19, 1885), and the way to Belgrade was open to the victors, when Austrian diplomacy patched up a peace between the rival Balkan powers.

A Russian intrigue forced Prince Alexander to abdicate almost on the morrow of his victory, and after a regency of some months Prince Ferdinand of Coburg was elected to the vacant throne. His policy was to make Bulgaria the leading power in the Balkan Peninsula, and for more than twenty years he was patiently preparing for the day when he could venture to challenge Turkey to battle. The men who had led the Bulgarian army at Slivnitza devoted themselves to the task of training the whole manhood of the principality to war. And meanwhile an organization, which had its centre at Sofia, kept

the Bulgarian claim to Macedonia before the world by exciting more than one insurrection in the Turkish province, and maintaining a kind of political brigandage, of which Turks, Servians, and Greeks—in a word, all who were not of the Bulgarian race—were the victims.

At last Prince Ferdinand felt himself strong enough to declare Bulgaria independent of the Sultan's suzerainty and to proclaim himself king, or—to use the official title derived from the old days of the Bulgarian empire in the early Middle Ages—"*Czar of the Bulgarians.*" It was expected that the Sultan would treat this action as a challenge to war; but Turkey was too much occupied with internal troubles, and, after a formal protest, accepted the accomplished fact.

Successive revolutions at Constantinople, and the helplessness of the Turks in the war with Italy about Tripoli, made the politicians of the Balkan States at last feel that it would be safe to venture upon a war of aggression against the Porte. Accordingly in the spring of 1912 they agreed to sink their mutual differences and combine their forces for what they described as a war of liberation, that was to expel the Turk from Europe, and free the Christians of the Balkan countries from his yoke. The crusading element in the enterprise made it popular with the subjects of the four allied princes, but religion had really very little to do with the schemes of the ambitious politicians and soldiers of Sofia and Belgrade, Athens and Cetinje.

So the Balkan League was formed—an alliance of Bulgaria, Servia, Greece, and Montenegro. Roumania, a Latin country, held aloof from what was mainly a Slav combination.

The Allies hoped to be able to attack Turkey while it was still involved in war with Italy, but on the very eve of hostilities the Sultan abandoned Tripoli and made peace with the Italians. Montenegro moved before the other allies were ready. The declaration of war between the rest of the League and Turkey came on October 17, 1912.

The Turks were not really ready for war, and they committed the error of underestimating the fighting force of their opponents. Within a fortnight Turkey suffered a series of defeats. Servians, Greeks, and Montenegrins gained fairly easy successes in their districts of the theatre of war, and failed only where two of the fortresses made an obstinate defence. Collapse was the characteristic of the Turkish operations in the open field.

But the most serious task of all had fallen to Bulgaria, and on the success of her arms the result of the whole war ultimately depended. Besides supplying a contingent for operations in Macedonia in combination with his allies, King Ferdinand had to deal with the main Turkish army in Eastern Thrace, which was concentrating to bar the direct line of advance on Constantinople.

With a population of less than four millions, Bulgaria had called more than 300,000 men to arms. It was a stupendous effort, and entailed a perilous

strain on the resources of the country. For a while its normal life had to cease. Bulgaria is chiefly an agricultural country. Village, farm, and field were swept clear of every able-bodied man, all the horses, and most of the cattle. Whole herds were driven off to serve as a reserve of meat for the commissariat. The draught oxen were turned over to the transport, and the country carts were requisitioned with them. The owners were paid in paper bonds, to be redeemed after the war. There was a similar sweep-up in the towns. All the men were called to arms. Every shop and store that held anything useful for war was cleared out by requisition. Women drove the tramcars in the cities. Schoolboys replaced the postmen. All business was suspended. The foreign bankers had refused a loan. The emergency was met by paying for all that was requisitioned in treasury bonds and making a large issue of paper money.

By the middle of October all the ordinary life of the country had come to an end. But the staff of the army counted upon being able to bring the war to a successful conclusion by the first days of 1913. The harvest had just been reaped. The men were told that they would be back to plough and sow their fields by the end of winter. But to accomplish this the war would have to be rushed through and serious risks taken.

By misleading reports in the press the Turks were made to underrate the force that had been rapidly got together among the hills north of Adrianople and

Kirk Kilissé. On the day that war was declared the Bulgarians had ready concentrated on this part of the frontier three armies with a combined force of well over 200,000 men. On the right, waiting for the word to march down the Maritza valley, was the 2nd Army, under General Ivanoff. On the left, north of Kirk Kilissé, was the 3rd Army, under General Dimitrieff. Between them, looking towards the opening of the Tundja valley, lay the 1st Army, under General Kutincheff. The king, with his headquarters at Stara Zagora on the right rear, was in nominal command of the whole. But the real commander was his "chief military adviser," General Savoff, who had for years been the organizer of the army, and was the author of the plan of campaign on which it was now to act.

The Bulgarian staff was on the whole remarkably well informed, and knew the Turks were not ready, and that their army was badly organized and only partly concentrated. In one respect, however, the information possessed by General Savoff was misleading. He believed that Adrianople was ill supplied with food, and would have to surrender very soon if closely blockaded. The fortress, well protected by a circle of outlying forts designed by German engineers, was a strong place, and effectually closed the main road and the railway to Constantinople. There is a second road to the Turkish capital by way of Kirk Kilissé and Bunarhissar, mostly a mere track across the open uplands. To the east of this line, as far as the Black Sea coast, the country

is impracticable for an army. It is a roadless tract of mountain land covered with dense forests. On the eastern road there was no serious obstacle. Savoff knew that Kirk Kilissé, though generally classed as a fortress, was really an open town. When the new fortifications were erected at Adrianople after the Russian war, a similar scheme was prepared for Kirk Kilissé; but only two forts had actually been erected, and these were weak, badly placed, poorly armed, and now in bad condition. He knew also that besides the garrison of Adrianople the Turks had pushed no considerable force up to the frontier. Their army was concentrating farther back. His plan therefore was:—

Ivanoff with the 2nd Army, to advance upon and blockade Adrianople.

Dimitrieff with the 3rd Army, to march upon Kirk Kilissé and take it by direct attack.

Kutincheff with the 1st Army, to support the movement by interposing between Adrianople and Kirk Kilissé, and preventing the garrison of the former from helping their comrades at the latter place.

These operations would open the Kirk Kilissé-Bunarhissar road. Dimitrieff would advance along it. Kutincheff would move across the country south of Adrianople, cut the railway, and advance along the main road by Lule Burgas on Chorlu, keeping in touch with Dimitrieff on his left. The two armies would combine to defeat the Turkish main army, and if possible force it away from its

direct line of retreat on Constantinople. For this purpose, while Kutincheff attacked it in front, Dimitrieff was to try to act against its right flank and rear.

The Turks had nominally five army corps and a cavalry division in this region of the theatre of war. They were supposed to number over 200,000 men, including some of the Sultan's best troops. The general expectation in Europe was that they would be victorious.

But one of the five corps never existed as an available unit. It was to have constituted the reserve of the army, but the regiments destined for it were sent one by one to complete the garrisons and make up deficiencies in the other corps. These were :—

| | *Commander.* | *Headquarters in peace time.* |
|---|---|---|
| 1st Corps . . | Omar Yaver . . . . | Constantinople. |
| 2nd ,, . . | Torgut Shefket . . . | Rodosto. |
| 3rd ,, . . | Mahmud Mukhtar . . | Kirk Kilissé. |
| 4th ,, . . | Ahmed Abouk . . . | Adrianople. |

The commander-in-chief selected by the War Minister, Nazim Pasha, was Abdallah Pasha, a young general, trained by the German reorganizer of the Turkish army, Von der Goltz. Mahmud Mukhtar Pasha (a son of Ghazi Mukhtar Pasha, one of the heroes of the war with Russia) was also a favourite pupil of the Prussian general, and had served for a while in the German Guard. Ahmed Abouk was a Circassian, an old soldier with more of the tradi-

tional Ottoman fighting spirit than of the scientific methods of the younger men. This mingling of old and new ways was characteristic of the whole of the Sultan's army. The scheme of reorganization drawn up by Von der Goltz had been adopted, but had not yet had time to bear fruit. It had gone just far enough to destroy much of the old army, without yet putting a new fighting machine in its place. Thus most of the old officers had been removed from the regiments, and only a few of the new men were ready to replace them. The army was from the first terribly short of officers of any kind.

The mobilization had proved a failure, for want of time, and through the ill-advised steps taken to hurry the troops to the front. The Turks have always been a minority in their European provinces. All the four corps assigned to the Eastern Army under Abdallah had to depend on drafts from Asia Minor to bring them up to their war strength. But it would be a matter of some weeks for most of these levies even to reach Constantinople. In Asia Minor there were few railways, and reservists had in many cases to march for hundreds of miles over bad roads. Sea transport would often have lightened their task, but up to the eve of the war the Italian fleet held hostile command of the eastern Mediterranean, and even after the peace with Italy the Turkish fleet made no effort to drive away the Greek warships that were cruising in the Archipelago.

To bring the Turkish regiments up to war strength recourse was had to various expedients. Volunteers,

many of whom had never till then handled a rifle, were enlisted. Thousands of men were passed into the ranks from the second line of the Redif or militia, a practically untrained force. A further and very serious element of weakness was the fact that after the Young Turk revolution the law of conscription had been extended to the Christians. This brought into the ranks numbers of Bulgarians, Greeks, and Armenians, whose loyalty was doubtful, and many of whom took the first opportunity that offered for flight or surrender.

Much of the German reorganization scheme existed only on paper. Army business had been neglected for politics. The commissariat and ambulance services were in such a rudimentary state as to be useless. There was no large reserve of ammunition, and no means for its rapid distribution. The four army corps had hardly any transport. None of them had a field telegraph or even a signal corps.

The Turkish army which was to oppose the main advance of the Bulgarians was thus, when the war broke out, still in process of formation out of very defective materials.

Some of the best troops had been diverted from the field army to garrison Adrianople. Not one of the four army corps was complete. Three of them (1st, 2nd, and 4th) and Salih Pasha's division of cavalry, mustering less than a thousand sabres, were concentrating on the Adrianople railway from Chorlu to Lule Burgas, the 1st Corps nearest to the

front. Mahmud Mukhtar Pasha was at Kirk Kilissé with most of his corps in the neighbourhood. Von der Goltz had advised that, at the outset, the Turks should stand on the defensive, holding the frontier fortresses, but concentrating their army to await the Bulgarian advance on a strong position behind the upper Ergene River near Chorlu, ground that could be further strengthened by entrenchments. But at the last moment the Sultan abandoned this prudent plan, and ordered a general advance. This was playing into the hands of Savoff and the Bulgarians.

As they crossed the border the three Bulgarian armies drove in the small detachments that were watching the frontier. On the right Ivanoff, after a mere skirmish, captured the town of Mustapha Pasha on October 19th, and pressed on towards Adrianople. In the centre and on the left Kutincheff and Dimitrieff came upon the heads of columns of the 3rd Turkish Corps, sent forward by Mahmud Mukhtar. These were easily forced back by superior numbers. The stress of the fighting fell upon Dimitrieff and the 3rd Bulgarian Army.

Mukhtar now concentrated a considerable part of the 3rd Corps to hold Kirk Kilissé, and here, on October 24th, the first serious fighting of the war took place. The Turks found that they had greatly undervalued their opponents. Kirk Kilissé was stormed, the two forts surrendered, and Mukhtar retired along the Bunarhissar road, followed up by the victors. Omar Yaver, hurrying up to his assist-

ance with the 1st Corps, ran against the heads of Kutincheff's columns. In the action which ensued the Turks made a poor fight. There was a panic among the new recruits of Omar's regiments, and the 1st Corps streamed back towards Lule Burgas in a disorderly retreat that soon degenerated into a flight.

On the news of these defeats Abdallah Pasha pushed the 2nd and 4th Corps forward to the neighbourhood of Lule Burgas, with Salih's cavalry, and decided to risk a battle, which proved to be the decisive action of the campaign.

The country which was to be the scene of the great battle is part of the region between the Ergene River and the forest-clad heights of the Istrandza Dagh. From the base of the hills the ground slopes very gently towards the river. It is a wide stretch of open rolling downs, in which the streams, running from the mountains to the Ergene, have worn out a number of narrow valleys, the only breaks in the general level. There is little cultivation, and the villages are few. The roads are little better than wagon tracks. Along the course of the streams, here and there one finds a group of mud-built huts. After a few hours of rain the hollows become swampy, and the roads, even on the higher ground, difficult for guns or wheeled traffic of any kind. Otherwise it is easy to traverse the country in all directions. In the northern part of the district, towards the hills, there are extensive woods near Bunarhissar (the "castle by the spring") and Viza. Towards the river the country is all open and almost treeless, except

near Lule Burgas, where there is some cultivation and vineyards cover the slopes to the westward. The main road from Adrianople to the capital and the railway line follow the course of the river, the latter being carried across the loops of the Ergene by iron girder bridges on stone piers.

Mahmud Mukhtar had retired on Viza with the 3rd Corps, followed up as far as Bunarhissar by Dimitrieff and the 3rd Bulgarian Army. It would seem that after the vanguard of the invaders occupied the latter town Mahmud Mukhtar made a sudden counter-stroke and drove them out. Dimitrieff's dispatch to headquarters announcing this check caused considerable anxiety there, and the rumour spread that the Turks had turned back and recaptured Kirk Kilissé itself. But with superior numbers arrayed against him, the commander of the 3rd Corps could not hold on at Bunarhissar. He continued his retreat to Viza and asked for reinforcements, and above all for ammunition and supplies. He was sent some Redif battalions originally destined for the reserve corps.

Abdallah Pasha had sufficient insight to guess that his opponent, Savoff, meant to use Dimitrieff's army for a blow against his flank and rear that might seriously endanger his line of retreat on the capital. When, therefore, he decided on making a stand at Lule Burgas, he ordered Mahmud Mukhtar to make a counter-attack on the Bulgarians about Bunarhissar, in order to check their further advance and keep them fully occupied.

The fighting thus took place on a front of more than twenty miles, though there was a considerable gap between the left of Mahmud Mukhtar's force advancing from Viza and the right of the main Turkish army near Lule Burgas. Here Abdallah had chosen for his position the line of high ground forming the left or eastern bank of the narrow valley through which the Karagash brook runs down to the Ergene. Detachments held the town of Lule Burgas and the railway station. Part only of the 1st Corps had been rallied, and a considerable number of fugitives, wounded and unwounded, passed through the lines and continued the weary tramp eastwards, accompanied by great numbers of refugees from the district already overrun by the enemy; men, women, and children bringing their few belongings with them in country carts. On the hills west of Lule Burgas a rearguard of the 1st Corps had halted to cover this exodus.

On the main position the 4th Corps (Ahmed Abouk) was posted on the left. At the railway bridge over the river breastworks had been erected on both sides of the Ergene, and on the southern bank trenches had been dug to bring a cross-fire of rifles to bear on the approaches to it. Some trenches were also dug along the crest held by the main battle line. In the centre was posted part of the 1st Corps under Omar Yaver. The right, facing Turk Bey and extending along the brook to Karagash village, was held by the 2nd Corps under Torgut Shefket. Abdallah Pasha had his headquarters behind the

centre at the village of Sakiskeui. A huge grassy mound close to the village—perhaps the grave of the dead who fell in some prehistoric tribal battle—afforded a lookout place for the general and his staff, commanding a wide view.

Savoff had directed Kutincheff, with the 1st Bulgarian Army, to advance on Lule Burgas. He was reinforced from Ivanoff's army before Adrianople, the men thus withdrawn from the siege of the fortress being replaced by bringing up Servian troops by rail and marching up new levies from Bulgaria itself. The Bulgarian forces thus available for the coming battle must have outnumbered the Turks by at least 50 per cent. None of Abdallah's corps were complete. Troops and guns were still coming up to join him. At no period of the engagement can he have had as many as 100,000 men in line. The first fighting took place on the afternoon of Monday, October 28th, when Kutincheff's vanguard drove in the Turkish detachment that had been left on the high ground west of Lule Burgas. The Turks at sundown still held a tree-covered ridge above the town.

On the Tuesday morning they were driven from this position, which, however, they had no intention of defending for more than a short time, for so far it was on the part of the Turks merely a delaying action. Behind the vanguard, that was thus clearing the way, the massive columns of infantry and artillery of Kutincheff's army were moving into position, forming up on the heights west of the

Karagash hollow, and extending their line gradually to the northwards, as more and more batteries and battalions came up to the front.

By midday the Bulgarian gunners were sending a shower of shells into Lule Burgas. For two hours the Turks held on to the place, and a battalion, entrenched along its western side and lining walls and enclosures, drove back with the fire of its rifles the first attempt the enemy made to rush the place with their infantry. South of the town Salih's cavalry, with the carbine fire of dismounted men, for a while successfully defended the approach to the railway station. But by two o'clock the increasing fury of the bombardment was making the town untenable, and a Bulgarian firing line, working gradually forward on the north of it, threatened to cut off the retirement of the garrison. The Turks withdrew to the heights to the eastward, and their retirement uncovered the flank of Salih's cavalry skirmishers. Covered by the fire of the batteries on the heights, Salih withdrew his men behind the lines of the 4th Corps, and the Bulgarians rushed the railway station.

The loss of these advanced points was, however, of no serious importance. Abdallah Pasha had never counted on holding them. His main battle line was intact, and his batteries soon made Lule Burgas too hot for the victors to remain in it. During the afternoon Ahmed Abouk's men on the Turkish left held their ground well, and the artillery, though suffering considerable loss, kept up a plucky duel

with the Bulgarian batteries on the opposite heights. Far away to the right Mahmud Mukhtar had advanced from Viza, and was making a good fight against Dimitrieff's army. In the centre Torgut Shefket actually gained some ground, repelling a first attack of the Bulgarians and then pushing forward batteries and battalions about Turk Bey, as if he had hoped to drive in the left of the enemy's main attack and outflank their prolonged firing lines.

Abdallah and the staff were very hopeful in the late hours of Tuesday afternoon, and the premature news of victory was sent back to Constantinople. But there were very disquieting features in the situation. As the day went on the Bulgarians were bringing more and more batteries into position, all of them armed with the new Schneider-Creusot quick-firers; and they seemed to have an unlimited supply of ammunition, for they kept up a rapid fire hour after hour. The training of the gunners was, it is true, not as good as their armament. They came into action at very long ranges and burst their shrapnel generally too high, and they wasted hundreds of shells on ground where there were few hostile troops. But if they thus threw away many a shell by wild firing, they had so many guns and such a wealth of ammunition at their disposal that plenty of shots told on their mark. All over the Turkish position, on the fighting lines and on the reserves behind them, the shower of shrapnel bullets came down in deadly gusts from the bursting shells. Comparatively few men were killed by this bom-

bardment, but the number of wounded was enormous. And often when one man was wounded it meant the withdrawal of two or more from the fight, for there were few surgeons with the army, and no ambulances or stretcher-bearers. Wounded men were helped rearwards by compassionate or half-hearted comrades. There was no help at hand for them, and their one hope was that, after roughly bandaging their wounds, they could plod wearily back over the long miles to Chorlu and there obtain railway transport to hospital, perhaps as far off as the capital itself. So during the day some thousands joined the stream of fugitives that was straggling eastwards behind the fighting line.

Just before sundown there came a sudden change in the situation in the Turkish centre. Kutincheff, anxious at the advance of the 2nd Corps against his left, had reinforced that part of the line, and the Bulgarians made a counter-attack that swept everything before it, and drove Torgut Shefket's men back to their original position on the heights. The Bulgarian infantry showed itself as anxious to come to close quarters as the Japanese had been on the battlefields of Manchuria. The men went into the fight full of a fanatical personal hatred of the enemy, and with the determination in each man's breast that he would try to kill at least one Turk, and kill him with the bayonet. So in battle the Bulgarians showed a disposition to get out of hand, not with any tendency to go backward, but with a wild impulse to disregard the lessons they had learned

on the parade ground, and close with the Turks in a fierce rush, reckless of the cost. As the firing lines went forward, suddenly some of the rank and file would raise the cry "*Na nas!*" ("with the bayonet!" literally, "with the knife!"); and despite the counter-orders of the officers the men would spring up and surge forward, followed by the supports—followed even by battalions breaking away from the reserves. It was before such a rush as this that Torgut Shefket's Corps was driven in. Only the close fire from trench and battery on the heights stopped the onset. The Bulgarians paid dearly for their success. The ground in front of the 2nd Turkish Corps was heaped with dead. But in their half-savage temper the Bulgarians could endure heavier losses than the tactician usually takes into account.

Darkness ended the fighting. The Turks, though they had held their ground, were in a pitiful plight. It was bitterly cold, but on those bare, treeless uplands few could find enough fuel to light a fire. In parts of the position there was no water. And worst of all, there was hardly any food. Whole battalions had eaten nothing all day, and now had to spend as best they could a chilly, foodless, and almost sleepless night. Even some of the generals had nothing to eat, and spent most of the night walking about, for sleep in the cold was impossible. There was no help for the wounded. The dead were left unburied. Many regiments stood to their arms again and again during the hours of darkness, when there came a false alarm that the enemy were advancing.

On these occasions there were some local panics, and many more fugitives stole away under the cover of night, unable or unwilling to endure the strain any longer.

As the sun rose on Wednesday, October 30th, a white mist hung over the valleys and the slopes of the downs, and for some time the gunners on both sides could not see far enough to bring the artillery into action. As the day grew warmer and the mists cleared away the cannonade began again. It was soon evident that Savoff had brought up all his reserve batteries during the night, and the Turkish artillery was heavily outnumbered. The enemy, too, seemed to have an unlimited supply of ammunition available; but the Turkish gunners, after the expenditure of the previous day, saw, to their dismay, that they had very little left. Had there been a vestige of real organization in the Sultan's army, ammunition columns would have come up during the night, and a regular distribution would have been made to renew the supply of shells and cartridges for the artillery and infantry. But the only reserve was made up of a few wagon loads that arrived during the morning, accompanied by some battalions of Redif or militia infantry.

It was no wonder, therefore, that during the morning the fire of the Turkish artillery, slow from the first, began to slacken still more. Some of the unfortunate batteries had each to fight six times the number of hostile guns. The loss among the gunners was heavy. The enemy shot well. After

the fight it was seen that numbers of the Turkish guns had their shields nearly knocked out of shape by fair hits of the enemy's shells. By noon numbers of the batteries were silent. Either their fire had been crushed out or their last available shell had been fired. And still the storm of shrapnel from the enemy's long lines of cannon rained destruction on the Turkish positions, and hundreds of wounded were constantly dribbling away to the rear. Others lay with the dead in the trenches and on the open ground.

General Savoff for some hours seemed to rely chiefly on the effects of this bombardment to break down Turkish resistance. He developed the attack of the Bulgarian infantry with a slow deliberation, that was perhaps inspired by the fear that, if pushed forward too rapidly, they would again get out of hand, and throw themselves prematurely upon the unshaken Turkish lines in disorderly onsets that might end in disaster. On the left, however, the hamlet of Turk Bey was taken after a brief resistance. But along the greater part of the line the Bulgarian infantry for a considerable time did no more than exchange long-range fire with the Turks in the trenches on the opposite slopes. Far away to the northward Mahmud Mukhtar was making a good fight, and gradually driving Dimitrieff's men back upon Bunarhissar. This prevented the flank attack proposed by Savoff on the main position being even attempted.

At the other extremity of the battlefield the first

serious attack was made by the Bulgarians soon after midday. Its objective was the extreme left of the Turkish position. Screened by the plantations on the low ground south of Lule Burgas a large force of infantry was concentrated. To prepare the way for its attack the Bulgarian artillery showered its shells upon the positions near the railway bridge and the slopes to the north-east of it. Then suddenly the firing line of infantry pressed forward, and behind it came line on line with fixed bayonets, charging forward in the grim silence that often accompanied a Bulgarian advance. In the rush the rearward lines overtook those in front, and the charge became a dense mass of men. Before this attack the Turks at the bridge head gave way, and it seemed that the bridge itself would be won.

But its main defence was still untouched. From trenches at the southern end of the bridge, and from others on the left bank at the bend of the river, there came a heavy cross-fire of musketry. On the height to the north-east the Turkish gunners swung round their pieces and sent a shower of shells into the mass of hostile infantry. The Bulgarians could not stand this converging fire, and fell back to the plantations from which they had advanced.

There was a lull in the battle. The unequal artillery duel continued, but the infantry on the Bulgarian side for a while either remained on the ground it held or moved forward very cautiously. The 4th Corps, on the Turkish left, was very short of ammunition by this time and was suffering heavy

loss, and could do little more than make a show of defence. For Abdallah Pasha the fact that his army had so far held its ground was of little value, for he was fighting under conditions that made it impossible for him to maintain much longer a purely defensive attitude. Could he have held on persistently, and improved the entrenchments along his front, repelled the Bulgarian attacks, and gradually worn down the enemy's force, he might hope that Mahmud Mukhtar would gain a victory on the right, and then turn upon the exposed flank of the Bulgarian line. But with a starving army, that was besides running short of ammunition, he could not afford to play this waiting game. There were barely enough shells and cartridges left to make some show of replying to the enemy's fire. Of food there was next to none. Thousands in that hapless army had not eaten a morsel for twenty-four hours, and some had starved for nearly two days. It is an almost incredible scandal that such a state of things should be possible with an army fighting on European ground, in its own territory, and with a railway running back to its base from the flank of the position. But so it was. Only men like the patiently enduring Turkish peasants, who filled the ranks, could have borne such privations so long. But to subject the men to a continuance of the strain was impossible. Abdallah knew that before sundown he must make an effort at all risks to obtain some decisive result, for he could not afford to await the leisurely development of Savoff's attack.

His most efficient force was the 2nd Corps, commanded by Torgut Shefket. During the day it had been joined by several battalions coming up from Chorlu with food in their haversacks and plenty of cartridges in their belts. He therefore sent word to Torgut to make a counter-attack on the Bulgarians about Turk Bey with every available man. At the same time, to divert the attention of the enemy from the preparation for this move, and perhaps to lure them into another attack on the bridge, he ordered a division of Ahmed Abouk's sorely tried corps on the left to fall back some distance from the crest of the ridge, that was swept by the hostile artillery.

Now came the crisis of the battle. What followed is best described in the striking words of a soldier who watched it, a veteran of many campaigns.*

"It was between two and three in the afternoon," he says, "when the centre division of Ahmed Abouk's Corps began to retire from its forward position. The first movement of the infantry was heralded by a crash of artillery fire. The Bulgarian gunners had evidently been expecting some change in position, either forward or backward, on this front. As the Turkish infantry moved slowly out of their trenches and trooped back to the rear with dignified deliberation, salvos of shrapnel burst above their heads. The whole firmament seemed to be turned into a Hades by the whip-like crackling of this devil-

* Mr. Lionel James, correspondent of the London *Times*. See his work, "With the Conquered Turk," pp. 167–170.

ish instrument of war. Let the Bulgarian gunners burst their shrapnel never so rapidly, never so accurately, they were unable to make those Turkish troops move one pulse more quickly than if their retirement were a parade operation.

"Then on the far right from the direction of Turk Bey arose another tumult. The head of Torgut Shefket's counter-attack had debouched from its cover. The 2nd Army Corps was making its supreme effort. Down the slope came the brown infantry in rapidly moving lines. Of a truth the Turk had taken the offensive. It was a wonderful spectacle, and for the moment it looked as if the succession of waves must be irresistible. On and on they came like a swarm of bees leaving a disturbed hive. Then suddenly from in front of them came a crash of fire. It was as if a million rifles were firing as one. The shrapnel from overhead was as nothing in comparison with this. It seemed as if the whole line of advancing Turks shuddered under the shock. There was no period to the crash; it was but a prelude to a sustained series that demonstrated to the utmost the devastating power of the modern firearm.

"The line of advancing Turks shuddered, and shuddering, the men seemed as if they had been shaken from their balance by some gigantic earthquake. With one impulse four to five thousand men had thrown themselves on their faces. The impetus had gone out of the attack. There was a lull in the crash of fire from the plantations surrounding Turk Bey. Spasmodic efforts were made by

the Turks to infuse life again into the movement. These efforts were but the signal for further outbursts of terrific fire from the enemy, whilst the whole hillside seemed shrouded in the dust which the shrapnel and rifle bullets churned up around the prostrate Turks. The forward impetus was killed.

"Suddenly there was another movement. Again the hoarse-throated quick-firers spoke. Again the wicked automatics poured forth their leaden stream of destruction. Again the Mannlicher breech-blocks worked to the fullest extent of their mechanism. The great counter-attack had failed, and the survivors were back to the cover of their position."

On the left the partial retreat of the 4th Corps and the spectacle of Torgut's failure had shaken the whole of the troops. Ahmed Abouk's men and the detachments of Omar Yaver's Corps on their right began a general retirement. The officers had been few in numbers even at the beginning of the battle, and an enormous proportion of them had already been killed or wounded. It was therefore all the more difficult to steady the broken ranks. Salih Pasha brought up his cavalry and dismounted a long line of skirmishers to check for a while the Bulgarian advance. In the centre Torgut made another attempt to attack, which ended even more quickly and disastrously than the first. Two batteries, hurried to the front to cover the movement, lost in a few minutes most of their men and horses under the concentrated fire of more than sixty hostile guns.

It was clear that the fight was now lost for Turkey.

Even on the far right Mahmud Mukhtar's advance had been stopped. Until the afternoon of the 30th he had made steady though slow progress, but by this time Savoff had reinforced Dimitrieff's army with all the men and guns he could spare from the Bulgarian right, and after three o'clock the Turks gained no further ground.

On the main battlefield that afternoon a considerable part of the 4th and 1st Corps had begun to retreat towards Chorlu. All who saw this first stage of the Turkish retirement agree that at the outset it was perfectly orderly. The Bulgarian guns kept up a heavy fire, so that over the heads of the retiring troops the air was full of the white smoke rings and bright flashes of the bursting shells. But the Turks simply shook themselves out into long lines, and the wide expanse of the downs was dotted with men walking steadily in this loose order, without hurry or excitement, and regardless of the hostile fire, which made fewer casualties among them than might have been expected.

Strange to say, the Bulgarians made no attempt to rush the position, though it was by this time partly abandoned. Only a few guns kept up a slow fire from the crest on the left, but in the centre Torgut Shefket still had his men well in hand and held on to the ground opposite Turk Bey. It would seem that the victors themselves were exhausted by the protracted struggle, and in no mood for a further effort to go forward.

The night that followed was a time of utter misery

th for the Turkish troops who still kept their ground d for those who were wearily plodding through the rkness towards Chorlu. These last, famished, ex-usted, encumbered with wounded men and civilian gitives, and with the cholera already claiming ctims among them, were rapidly becoming a mere ob. The tales told of their having committed rocities on Bulgarian peasants who fell into their nds seem to have had no foundation. Few of the lgarians of the district had remained so far in eir farms and villages. The European corre-ondents who shared the miseries of the flight to horlu spoke with admiration of the patience of the aten Turks, of courtesies they received from men d officers, one Englishman telling how a hungry ldier even insisted on sharing a small loaf with m.

Abdallah Pasha spent the night at Sakiskeui with s staff. Early in the morning he mounted with s staff and began the dreary ride back to Chorlu nid the wreck of his army. Torgut Shefket, th what was left of his corps, acted for a while as a arguard, holding on to the ground near Turk Bey th a few guns and many rifles in action, until at st the Bulgarians moved up the heights between m and the Ergene River and he had to go. The ly pursuit that the victors attempted was to push rward some batteries that shelled the retiring rks, whose retreat, orderly at first, soon became broken flight. If Savoff had had a brigade of valry with him, he might have collected thousands

of prisoners. If even some of his infantry and artillery had been fresh enough to make a short forced march, the result would have been the capture of great numbers of the Sultan's broken army. But pursuit there was none.

While the last remnants of the 2nd Corps abandoned the field the thunder of cannon still came from the northward. Mahmud Mukhtar, reinforced by a division of Redifs, had renewed the fight before Bunarhissar. During the whole of the 31st he continued the fight, apparently in ignorance of the fate that had overtaken the rest of the army. It was not till the morning of November 1st that he realized that to hold on any longer would be to have the whole of Savoff's army on his hands, and to avoid utter disaster he began his retreat through the wooded country towards Viza. But after leaving the battlefield there was something like a panic among his men. Some regiments held together; others broke up into a mob of fugitives. Some of the artillery-drivers even unhooked their teams when they found the gun-wheels sticking in the muddy track, and abandoning the guns, rode off through Viza, never halting till they reached the railway line. Here again there was no pursuit. Two days after the battle Mahmud Mukhtar was able to send back a party with 400 draught oxen, which brought back with them a number of guns that had been thus left on the road.

At Chorlu the wounded and many unwounded fugitives crowded the trains that went off in suc-

cession to Constantinople. Every carriage was packed. The roofs were crowded, and men hung on footboards and buffers. Others plodded along the roads, many dying by the wayside of sickness, wounds, and exhaustion. At Chorlu, Ahmed Abouk rallied part of his corps, and held the village for some days, while Salih with his cavalry watched for the first signs of a renewed advance of the Bulgarians. But for some days the invaders made no further move. This gave time for the beaten army to reach the lines of Chatalja, covering the capital, where it was reorganized and joined by large reinforcements from Asia.

There were no newspaper correspondents present at the battle on the Bulgarian side, and the accounts sent to Europe by various journalists, who were no nearer the battlefield than King Ferdinand's headquarters at Stara Zagora in Bulgaria itself, or the frontier town of Mustapha Pasha, accounts based on information received from the staff, represented the battle of Lule Burgas as having been a fight to a finish, ending in the victors storming the Turkish positions and routing the Sultan's army. This version of what occurred was generally accepted, until a comparison of the story with the narratives of several independent and experienced war correspondents on the other side, and that of a German officer serving on the Turkish staff, showed that the defence had collapsed for the reasons already explained before the Bulgarian attack was driven home, and that the only prolonged close fighting was on the Turk-

ish right before Bunarhissar. The Bulgarian official accounts also erred in representing the fighting as having been continued for three days longer, ending with a fierce struggle for the heights along the Ergene near Chorlu, where, as we have seen, Ahmed Abouk was able to rally a strong rearguard, and where he was undisturbed until the War Minister ordered him to join the rest of the army at the Chatalja position.

The Bulgarians owed their success to their artillery, and still more to the imbecile conduct of the Turkish Government in pushing forward its army to Lule Burgas and leaving it to starve in the presence of the enemy, and to fight a three days' battle with only one day's supply of shells and cartridges. Even so the victory was a costly one, so costly that the amount of the losses incurred by the infantry in their wild attacks was concealed by the Bulgarian Government. That it must have been heavy is shown by the fact that the 1st Silistria Regiment, which was engaged in the fight with Torgut Shefket's Corps, lost 50 per cent. of its men. Against better trained and better supplied troops than the mixed force that the Turks brought into action, there is no doubt that such wild rushes across exposed ground would have failed as completely as they collapsed in other recent wars. The days of Lule Burgas afford no proof that the old-fashioned attack in mass from a distance is possible in the face of modern rifles. The easy destruction of the great Turkish counter-attack by the fire of the Bulgarian infantry enforces the lesson.

The conditions that so gravely handicapped the Turks, and gave the invaders a comparatively easy victory, were the result of the prolonged neglect of the Sultan's army in time of peace, and the lack of all well ordered preparation for war. One may say that, to a great extent, it is true that battles are now won in the years that precede them. The gigantic effort put forth on the modern battlefield is, as it were, the application at the working point of a vast store of energy accumulated in the long period of preparation and organization.

All that has yet been seen in war—even such a battle of giants as that of Mukden—will be surpassed on the day when the forces of two great military powers or of two great leagues of armed nations meet in decisive conflict. It is quite possible that in a European war between states of the first rank more than a million men will meet in combat on a single far-extended battlefield with a front of a hundred miles or more.

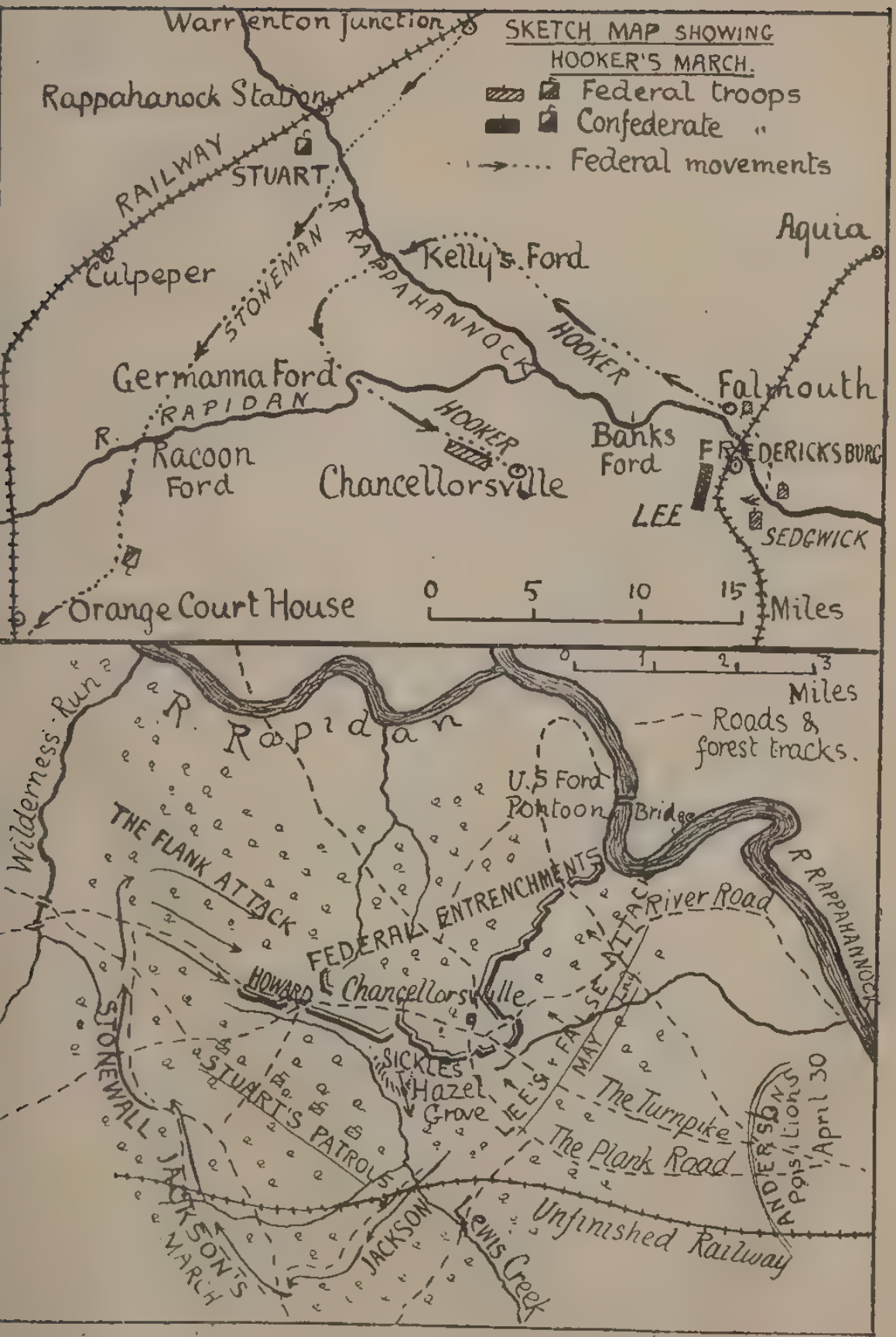
The commander-in-chief of an army engaged in such a battle will direct the fight from some station well to the rear, perhaps where he can see nothing of the actual operations, and can only hear the far-off thunder of hundreds of guns. If he wishes to inspect for himself his battle array, he will no longer —as in old times—ride along the ordered lines surrounded by his staff amid the welcoming cheers of his men. Instead of this, he will sweep swiftly overhead, seated beside an aviator in a powerfully engined aeroplane. Then he will fly back to his

battle station, where he will find himself in much the same position as the director of a military war game worked out on a large scale map.

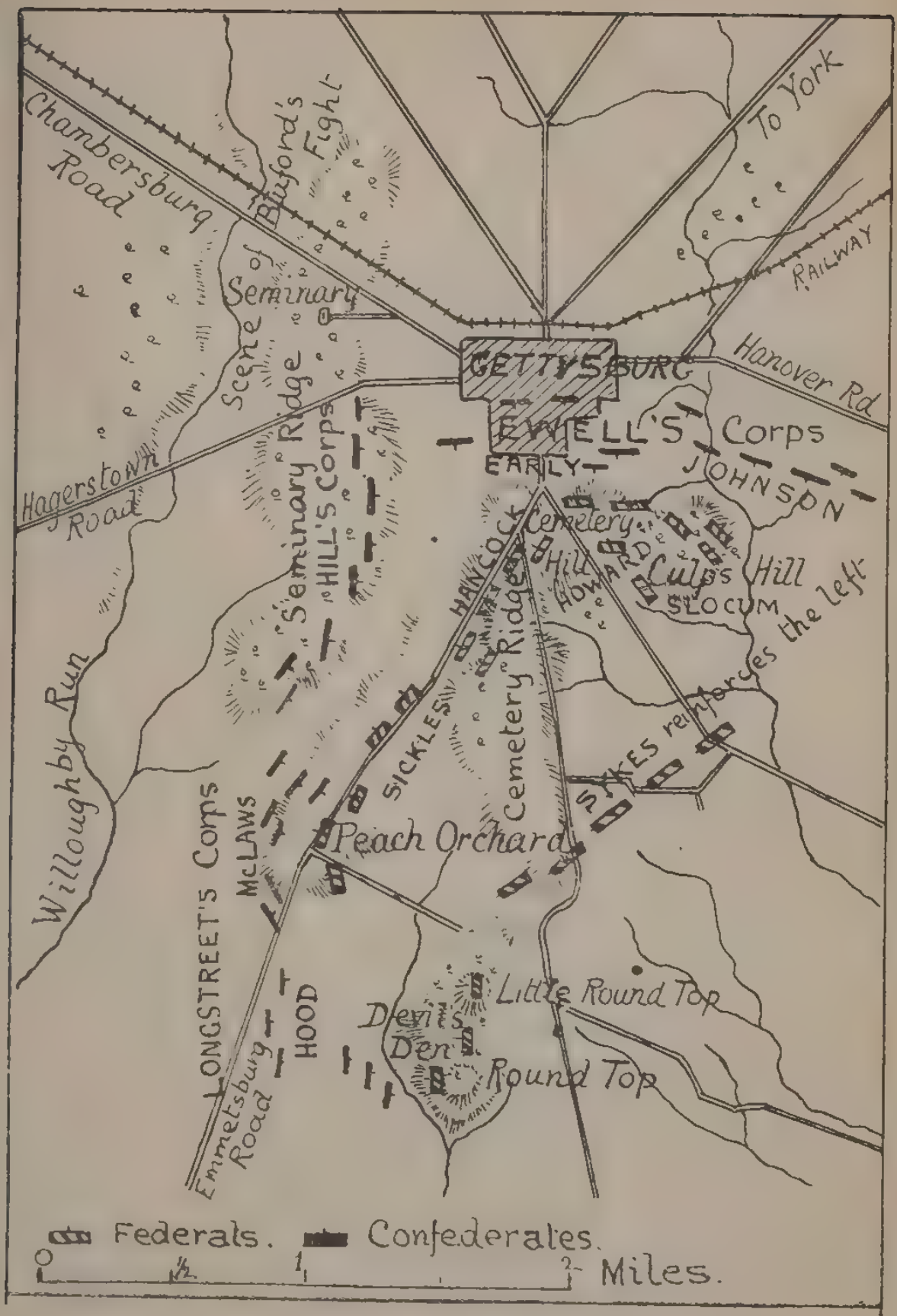
On that table the staff map will be marked out with the positions of friend and foe. Field telephones, telegraphs, and wireless installations will link him with every army corps and division. He will be constantly receiving information, and from time to time dictating orders, which will be transmitted over the wires or through the air. All day long he will be solving problems of strategy and tactics undisturbed by the terrors of the actual conflict. War has become a scientific business under the gigantic developments of our day.

Every discovery and invention of applied science is made tributary to the needs of the soldier. Wireless telegraphy has facilitated the communication of orders and intelligence. Aerial navigation has changed the whole conditions of the conflict. Over the embattled armies will hover airships and aeroplanes. They will be the scouts of the future battlefield, and perhaps act also as winged messengers of death, showering down explosive bombs on enemies below. There may even be a preliminary struggle for the command of the upper air as a prelude to the fight, thus realizing the poet's vision of " the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue."

THE END.




I. CHANCELLORSVILLE.




2. GETTYSBURG.

(Situation about 4.30 p.m. on the Second Day.)

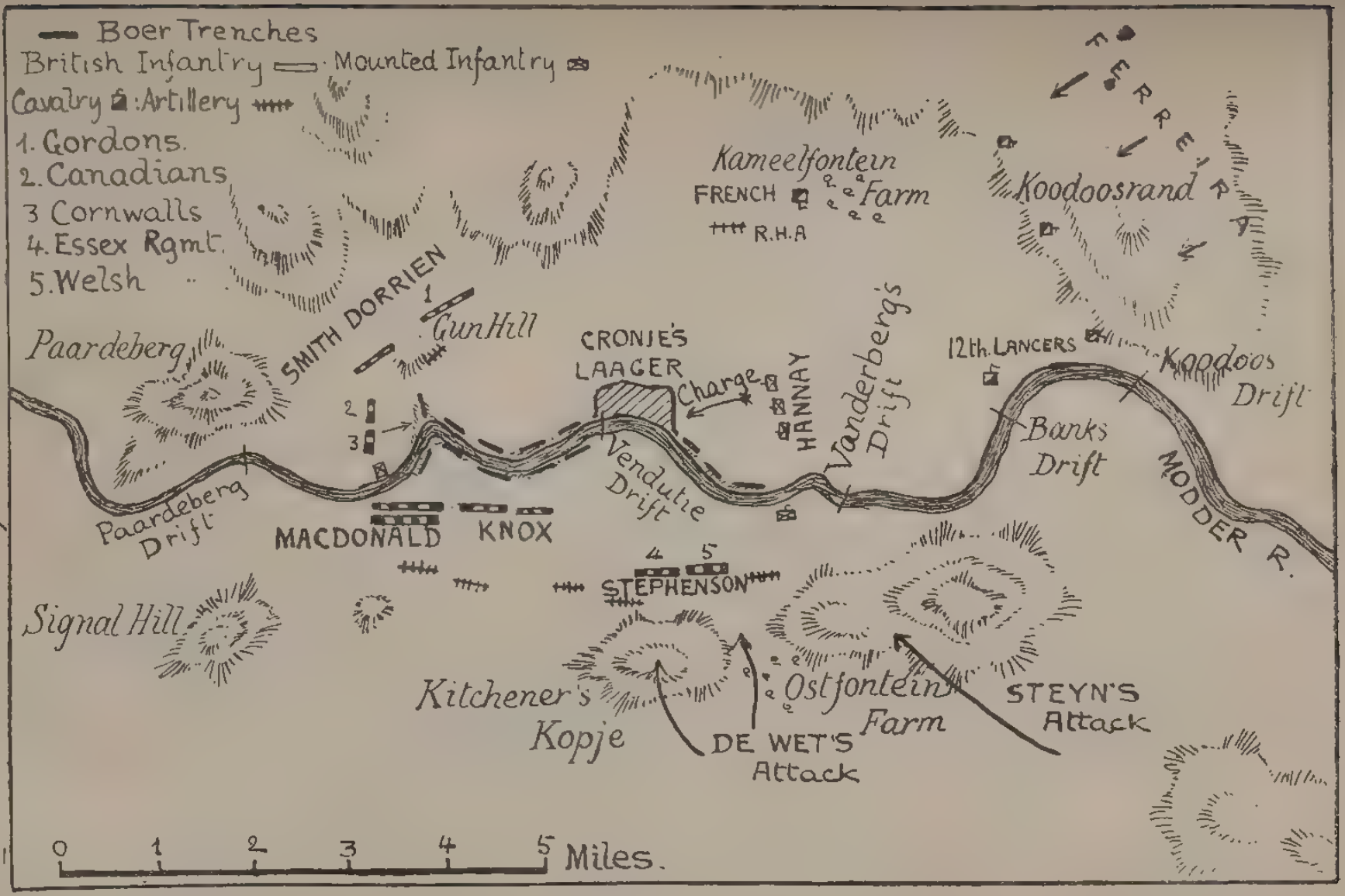
3. SEDAN.

(Situation about 7 a.m.)

4. Battle of Adowa.

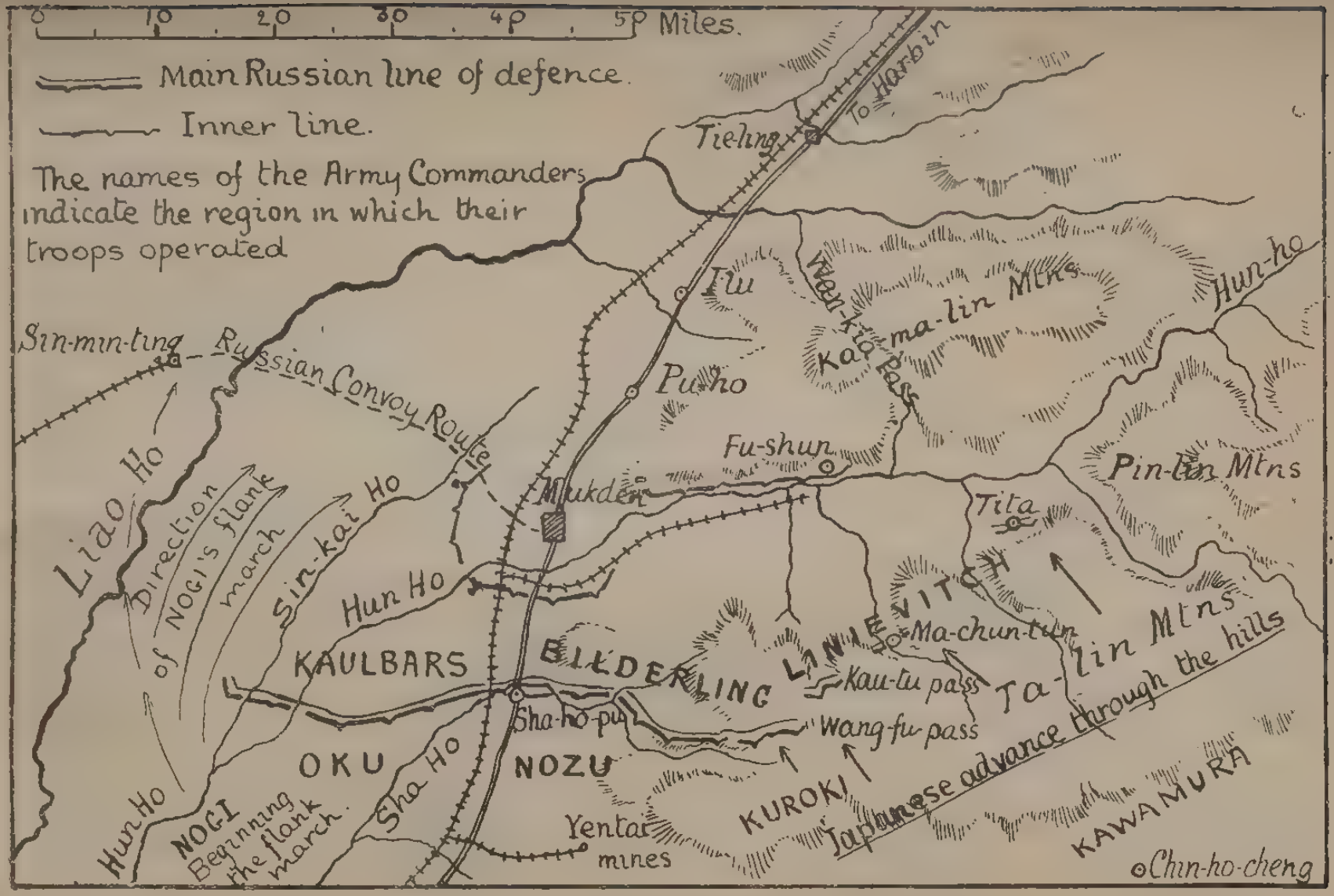
5. OMDURMAN.

(Second Part of the Battle.)



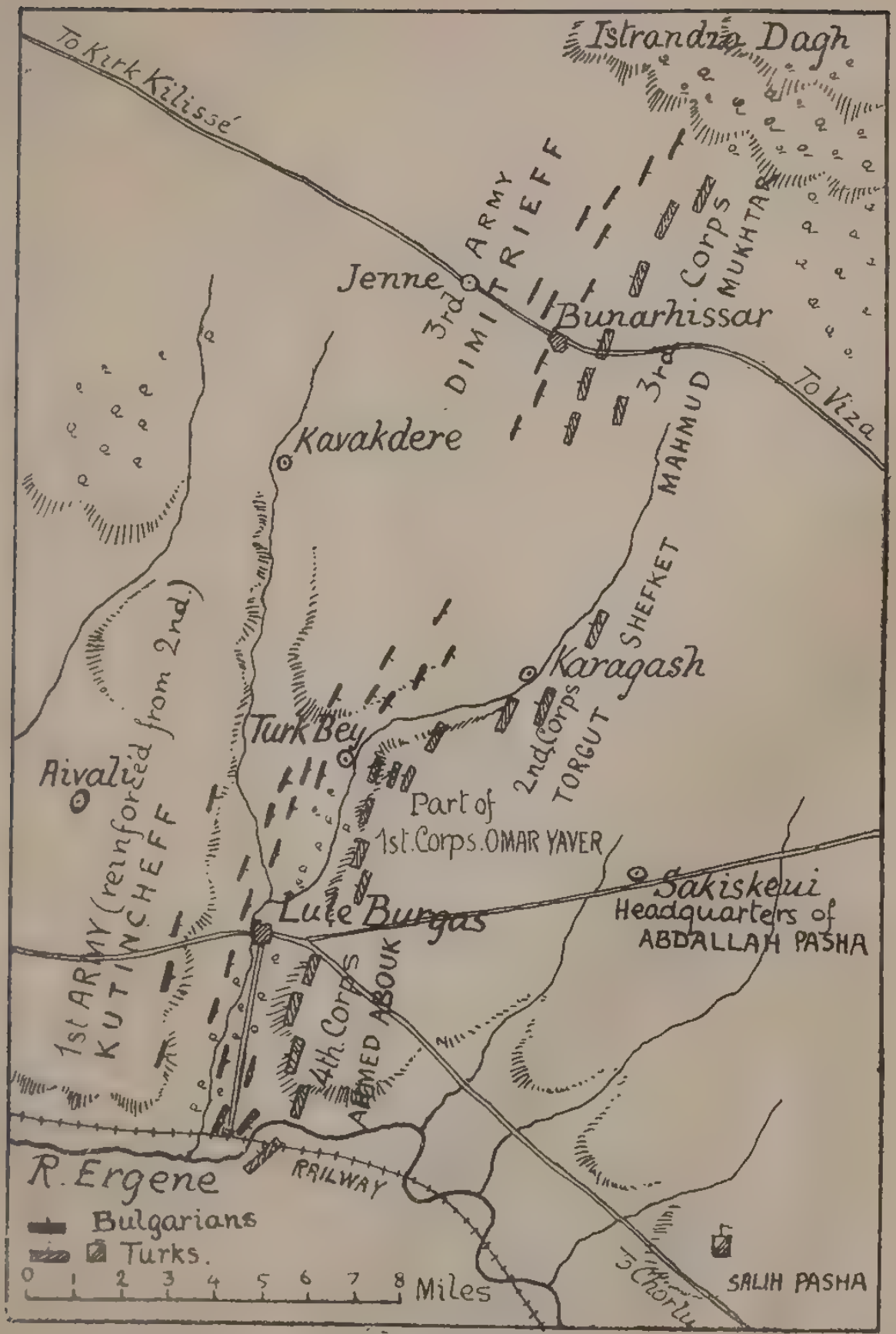

6. PAARDEBERG.

(Feb. 18, 1900.)




7. MUKDEN.

(Situation in the First Days of the Battle.)




8. LULE BURGAS.

(Position in the Afternoon of Oct. 30, 1912.)